

# ONE

## SUNS, SONS AND BAD PUNS

With the presupposition set in place that all religions evolved from the same source—this assumption is unseen, of course, by the viewer initially—and thus forming the foundation of the message, the introduction to the sun-worship theme proceeds with perhaps the single biggest laughable element I have ever witnessed in a purported work of research. This is the subtle and almost shamefully dishonest confusion of “sun” and “son.”

First, Z presents us with the case for sun-worship in general: in ancient societies the dependence on the sun for agrarian life “made the sun the most adored object of all time” (we are not told *who* adored it, versus *who did not*, which makes a world of difference to the story). Then we are instructed that these sun-adorers also watched the stars, and named the constellations after people and animals (again, we are not told *who*); and with these names came “elaborate myths involving their movements and relationships.” This all leads us to the central claim about these pagans: “The sun, with its life-giving and -saving qualities was personified as a representative of the unseen creator god ...‘God’s Sun,’ the light of the world, the savior of human kind.”

Now keep in mind that during the movie these things are not read, as you are reading them. The phrase “God’s Sun” is only heard, not seen. The distinction between “son” and “sun” is far from obvious. Nevertheless, some vital explanation and important logical links are left out. For example, if the sun was

the object of worship, where and how did the idea of an “unseen creator god” enter the picture all of the sudden? We are not told—it just appears. Again, there is no reference to any known text of ancient civilizations or original source. *Some* ancient Egyptians did believe in an unseen creator god who belonged to a group of other gods, but this was one belief among hundreds in the vast panoply of Egyptian polytheism. There were, after all, many rival gods and myths stemming from rival cities, temples, and dynasties over a thousand years. Picking one group to represent all of ancient religion could be like selecting the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists (an actual denomination) to represent all of Christianity in western history from A.D. 70 to the present. Arbitrary! Unless we are presented with some substantial and relevant evidence, I can only assume that this idea of a “creator god” has been planted in *Z* for the sake of drawing in and shocking listeners who do happen to believe in an unseen Creator Who had a representative Son.

Meanwhile, back to the big pun. We are introduced to “Horus” who is, truly, a well-known Egyptian god associated with sun worship. *Z* presents him as “*the* Sun God of Egypt” (though there were many sun gods in Egypt, particularly *Ra*, who was also a creator god, of which there were also many), and also as a “solar messiah” (strangely, *Z* chooses to use a distinctly Hebrew term, *messiah*, to label an Egyptian god—again, a trick to bamboozle the audience). We are then told that Horus (among many other alleged similarities to Jesus) was born of a virgin: thereby easing into the “son-ness” of the Sun. Then, finally, the script makes the jump: “Horus was known by many gestural names such as ...God’s Anointed *Son*.”

Now, of course, this swindle has already taken place to the hearer, but the script waits a while before it completes the heist. Like a shoplifter he lingers around, casually looking normal like

any interested customer, until you blink, and then the Hubba-Bubba box is empty. Well, somebody stole my theological candy, and I've caught 'em red-handed. I'm ready to press charges.

"Sun of God" equals "Son of God"? Are they serious? Is anyone buying this, for real? Do the producers of *Z* not realize the obvious here? That this sad parallel *only works in English*—a language which did not even begin to develop until at the earliest around A.D. 500? *Z* has founded its entire argument on a *bad pun* which is about 4,000 years out of place linguistically, and about that many miles geographically, too—a testimony to the producer's wildly cavalier abuse of fact in the name of scholarship. It must be embarrassing to have such utter doltishness be exposed under the light of the day—something for which we all can thank the Sun.

Unfortunately, it takes a couple of paragraphs into the script before this "bait-and-switch" move occurs (although, the listener will hear it take place well before due to the way the phrase is used in context). The writer here is careful not to play his hand too quickly, or perhaps he is trying to avoid putting into print what he knows is an obvious plate of goofiness. You can tell from how well it is woven and edited in—hidden, that is to say—that the writer is half-ashamed of himself. Well, I'm aiming for his other half now:

His source for the pun is the new-age writer known as "Acharya S," who herself reaches into the work of Jacob Bryant (1715-1804). In his now outdated and always fringe work from 1774, *A New System or Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, Bryant claims to spot cognates between ancient Indian "San, Zan, Zon, Zaan" all of which we are assured mean "Sun," and Egyptian "Sonchin, Son-cohen," allegedly meaning "priests of the sun" ("Cohen" does mean "priest" in Hebrew, however).

Neither *Z* nor Acharya produces a single quotation from an original source to give even an example, let alone a parallel, nor

do they even attempt to show the words in original languages with translations, or even the logic behind their translations. We are left with the *bare authority of Acharya S*, who states, “Thus, the English word ‘son’ is not a false cognate with ‘sun’, and it is truthfully said that the ‘son of god’ is the ‘sun of god.’”<sup>1</sup>

Did I miss something in this “proof”? Bryant did not even mention the English language, and we are nowhere given a basis to how to get from ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics or Sanskrit characters to English spellings (since in our modern language, the words “Son” and “Sun” vary only one letter in spelling but widely in meaning). So we are left following Acharya’s mental leap across the foggy abyss of nearly pre-historic languages. If you want to jump, feel free; but you have been forewarned.

### Dead Languages and Dead Scholars

In further illustration of the absurdity of relying on an alleged pun bridging ancient and modern languages, consider the fact that not even *Latin* scholars today are comfortable with *pronouncing* Latin because it has not been a spoken language for centuries. It is readable, but not speak-able. Anyone basing an argument on a pun (or a homophone)<sup>2</sup>—which relies entirely on the pronounced *sound* of a word, would rightfully be laughed out of the academy. If such a gulf exists with a language that died a couple of centuries ago, and uses the same letters as English, image the black hole that is created by pictographic systems to which we have no historical connection from 4,000 years back.

Suppose, however, that this great pun did work in Egyptian and Sanskrit. Let’s remember that the stories of the Bible came to us through Hebrew and Greek. Shouldn’t we find a similar correspondence between the ideas of “Sun” and “Son” in those languages as well? Of course. But nothing of the sort exists. Z’s theory, if carried out consistently, would have us believe that the

Hebrew *ben* (son) is equal to the Hebrew *shemesh* (sun) or even to the Hebrew *or gadol* (the greater light of Gen. 1:16). There is no “Sun of God” idea in Hebrew. There is, however, a “Son” of God, for example, in Psalm 2:7: “The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Compare also Ex. 4:22–3, and Hosea 11:1, where Israel is referred to as God’s son). In these passages the word for son is *ben*, as it always is in Hebrew, with no possible confusion with solar ideas in any way, not even by the wildest minds.

Biblical Greek is no less clear. *Huios* (son) is never confused or substituted by *helios* (sun), *haymera* (day) or *phos* (light). Therefore, Hebrew and Greek thought and language, from which Biblical religion comes, do not and *cannot* follow the alleged Egyptian “cognate” (which is highly doubtful that it ever existed in the first place). The only possible place, to my immediate knowledge, that one could find even a hint of such substitution in all of the Bible is in the last chapter of Malachi, where the prophet says, “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings” (Mal. 4:2). But a simple reading of the context shows that this is not confusing the person (son) and the celestial object (sun), but rather standard Hebrew poetry used in prophecy: Malachi is warning of a day of burning judgment that will dawn, in which the wicked will be burned away and the righteous will receive life and nourishment. This is no different from some agrarian parables of Jesus that mention the sun (Matt. 13:3–9, 18–23). In fact, I’m not even certain (and OT students may be tempted to jump here) that personification is necessary here. “His,” which personifies “sun” in the phrase “his wings” is not necessary or even obvious in the Hebrew text, and most translations, especially the more modern ones, translate this as “its wings.” I will say more about the sun in Biblical theology

below; this should suffice for now to more than adequately put to rest Z's extravagant abuse of language.

So understand this: all this confusion derives from the unwarranted use of one lone mythologist, Jacob Bryant, whom three centuries of scholars have since found quaint at best. To me, it looks more like Acharya S needed a scholarly-looking citation to support her own astrological fancies, and so she had to cherry-pick among the few obscure writers that support her conclusion. With this method, anyone could find support for any dream in any discipline they wish to push. All they would need then is a slick narrator with a cheap web video production program, and they could have their own movement, too. Groom your pet theory, and find your own Jacob Bryant, and shoot for the stars!

As a final note we should point out that Bryant himself probably would not have used his scholarship in the exaggerated way Z has. When he died in 1804 he left £2000 (about \$55,000 today) to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, an organization devoted to Christian missionary work. Apparently, this archeologist believed more strongly in the Gospel of Jesus Christ than in any fanciful theories that could result from his own historical work. Z would do well to follow his example.

### Notes

1. Acharya S, *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled* (Adventured Unlimited Press, 2004), 76; referenced in the interactive transcript to *Zeitgeist* at <http://www.zeitgeistmovie.com/sun1.htm> .
2. A homophone (homo = "same" + phone = "sound") is a word that is pronounced the same as another word but differs in meaning.