Gamaliel's Interview with Joseph, Mary and Others Concerning Jesus
The hagiographa or holy writings, found in the St. Sophia Mosque at Constantinople, made by Gamaliel, in the Talmuds of the Jews, 27 B.C. It seems Gamaliel was sent by the Sanhedrin to interrogate Joseph and Mary in regard to this child Jesus. He says:

I found Joseph and Mary in the city of Mecca, in the land of Ammon or Moab. But I did not find Jesus. When I went to the place where I was told he was, he was somewhere else; and thus I followed him from place to place, until I despaired of finding him at all. Whether he knew that I was in search of him and did it to elude me, I cannot tell, though I think it most surely the former was the reason, for his mother says he is bashful and shuns company. Joseph is a wood-workman. He is very tall and ugly. His hair looks as though it might have been dark auburn when young. His eyes are gray and vicious. He is anything but prepossessing in his appearance, and he is as gross and glum as he looks. He is but a poor talker, and it seems that yes and no are the depth of his mind. I am satisfied he is very disagreeable to his family. His children look very much like him, and upon the whole I should call them a third rate family. I asked him who were his parents. He said his father's name was Jacob, and his grandfather was Matthew. He did not like to talk on the subject. He is very jealous. I told him that we had heard that he had had a vision, and I was sent to ascertain the facts in the case. He said he did not call it a vision; he called it a dream. He said after he and Mary had agreed to marry, it seemed that something told him that Mary was with child; that he did not know whether he was asleep or awake, but it made such an impression on his mind that he concluded to have nothing more to do with her; and while he was working one day under a shed, all at once a man in snowy white stood by his side, and told him:

Not to doubt the virtue of Mary, for she was holy before the Lord; that the child conceived in her was not by man, but by the Holy Ghost, and that the child would be free from human passions. In order to do this he must— that is, his humanity must— be of the extract of almah (the Hebrew word for virgin) that he might endure all things and not resist, and fill the demands of prophecy. He said the angel told him that:

This child should be great and should rule all the kingdoms of the world. He said that: This child should set up a new kingdom, wherein should dwell righteousness and peace, and that the kingdoms of this world which should oppose him, God would utterly destroy. I asked him, How could a virgin conceive of herself without the germination of the male? He said:

This is the work of God. He has brought to life the womb of Elizabeth, so she had conceived and will bear a son in her old age who will go before and tell the people of the coming of the King.

After telling me all these things, he disappeared like the melting down of a light. I then went and told Mary what had occurred, and she told me that the same angel, or one like him, had appeared to her and told her the same things.

So I married Mary, thinking that if what the angel had told us was true, it would be greatly to our advantage; but I am fearful we are mistaken. Jesus seems to take no interest in us, nor anything else much. I call him lazy and careless. I do not think he will ever mount to much, much less be a king. If he does, he must do a great deal better than he has been doing. I asked him how long after that interview with the angel before the child was born. He said he did not know, but he
thought it was seven or eight months. I asked him where they were at that time. He said in Bethlehem.

The Roman commander had given orders for all the Jews to go on a certain day to be enrolled as taxpayers, and he and Mary went to Bethlehem as the nearest place of enrollment; and while there this babe was born. I asked him if anything strange occurred there that night. He said that the people were much excited, but he was so tired that he had gone to sleep, and saw nothing. He said toward day there were several priests came in to see them and the babe, and gave them many presents. And the news got circulated that this child was to be King of the Jews, and it created such an excitement that he took the child and his mother and came to Moab for protection, for fear the Romans would kill the child to keep it from being a rival to the Romans. I discovered that all of Joseph's ideas were of a selfish kind. All he thought of was himself.

Mary is altogether a different character, and she is too noble to be the wife of such a man. She seems to be naturally a good woman. I asked her who her parents were, and she said her father's name was Eli, and her mother's name was Anna; her grandmother's name was Penel, a widow of the tribe of Asher, of great renown.

I asked her if Jesus was the son of Joseph. She said he was not. I asked her to relate the circumstances of the child's history. She said that one day while she was grinding some meal there appeared at the door a stranger in shining raiment, which showed as bright as the light. She was very much alarmed at his presence, and trembled like a leaf; but all her fears were calmed when he spoke to her; for he said:

Mary, thou art loved by the Lord and He has sent me to tell thee that thou shalt have a child; that this child shall be great and rule all nations of the earth.

She continued: I immediately thought of my engagement to Joseph, and supposed that was the way the child was to come; but he astonished me the more when he told me that (her) cousin:

Elizabeth had conceived and would bear a son, whose name was to be John; and my son should be called Jesus.

This caused me to remember that Zacharias had seen a vision and disputed with the angel, and for that he was struck with dumbness, so that he could no longer hold the priest's office.

I asked the messenger if Joseph knew anything of the matter. He said that:

He told Joseph that I was to have a child by command of the Holy Ghost, and that he was to redeem his people from their sin, and was to reign over the whole world; that every man should confess to him and he should rule over all the kings of the earth.

I asked her how she knew that he was an angel, and she said he told her so, and then she knew he was an angel from the way he came and went. I asked her to describe how he went away from her, and she said he seemed to melt away like the extinguishing of a light.

I asked her if she knew anything of John the Baptist. She said he lived in the mountains of Judea the last she knew of him. I asked her if he and Jesus were acquainted, or did they visit. She said she did not think they knew each other.

I asked her if at the time this angel, as she called him, visited her, she was almah (virgin). She said she was; that she had never showed to man, nor was known by any man. I asked her if she at that time maintained her
fourchette; and after making her and Joseph understand what I meant, they both said she had, and Joseph said this was the way he had of testing her virtue.

I asked her if she knew when conception took place. She said she did not. I asked her if she was in any pain in bearing, or on delivering the child. She said, None of any consequence. I asked her if he was healthy; to give me a description of his life. She said he was perfectly healthy; that she never heard him complain of any pain or dissatisfaction; his food always agreed with him; that he would eat anything set before him, and if anyone else complained he would often say he thought it good enough, much better than we deserved. She said he settled all the disputes of the family; that no odds what was the subject or who it was, one word from him closed all mouths, and what gave him such power was his words were always unpretending and spoken as though they were not intended as a rebuke, but merely as a decision. I asked her if she had ever seen him angry or out of humor. She said she had seen him apparently vexed and grieved at the disputes and follies of others, but had never seen him angry.

I asked her if he had any worldly aspiration after money or wealth, or a great name, or did he delight in fine dress, like the most of youth. She said that was one thing that vexed her, he seemed to take no care of his person; he did not care whether he was dressed or not, or whether the family got along well or ill; it was all alike to him. She said she talked to him about it, and he would look at her a little grieved and say, Woman (for such he always called me), you do not know who I am. Indeed, she said he takes so little interest in the things of the world and the great questions of the day, they were beginning to despair of his ever amounting to much--much less be a king, as the angel said he would be; if so, he would have to act very differently from what he was acting at that time.

I told her that the Jewish doctors contended that the amorous disposition is peculiar to the male. I asked her if she had ever seen in the private life of Jesus any signs of such disposition. She said she had not. I asked if she saw in him any particular fondness for female society. She said she had not; if anything, rather the contrary; that the young betaul (the word in the Hebrew for young women) were all very fond of him, and were always seeking his society, and yet he seemed to care nothing for them; and if they appeared too fond of him, he treated them almost with scorn.

He will often get up and leave them, and wander away and spend his time in meditation and prayer. He is a perfect acetic in his life. When I see how the people like to be with him, and ask him questions, and seem to take such delight with his answers--both men and women--it almost vexes me.

They say there is a young woman in Bethany whom he intends to marry; but unless he changes his course very much he will never be qualified to have a family. But I do not believe the report. He never seems to me to care anything about women when he is in my presence.

Thus it seems that Joseph and Mary have both lost all confidence in his becoming anything. They seem to think that the Sanhedrin should do something for him to get him out and let him show himself to the people. I tried to console them by telling them that my understanding of the prophecy was that he had to come to the high priesthood first, and there work in the spiritual dominion of the heart;

And when he had brought about a unity of heart and oneness of aim, it would be easy enough to establish his political claim; and all who would not willingly submit
to him, it would be an easy matter with the sword of Joshua or Gideon to bring under his control. It seemed to me that his parents' ideas are of a selfish character; that they care nothing about the Jewish government nor the Roman oppression.

All they think of is self-exaltation, and to be personally benefited by their son's greatness. But I told them they were mistaken; that the building up of the kingdom of heaven was not to be done by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, and it would not do for us to use carnal weapons nor to expect carnal pleasures to be derived therefrom; that it was not my understanding of the prophecy that this king was to use such weapons either for himself or for the benefit of a party, but for the good of all men; that his dominion was to be universal, and it was to be of a spiritual character; that he was sent to the lost and not to the found.

His parents told me of an old man who lived on the road to Bethany who had once been a priest, a man of great learning, and well skilled in the laws and prophets, and that Jesus was often there with him reading the law and prophets together; that his name was Massalian, and that I might find Jesus there. But he was not there.

Massalian said he was often at Bethany with a young family, and he thought there was some love affair between him and one of the girls. I asked him if he had seen anything like a courtship between them. He said he had not, but inferred from their intimacy and from the fondness on the woman's part, as well as from the laws of nature, that such would be the case.

I asked him to give me an outline of the character of Jesus. He said that he was a young man of the finest thought and feeling he ever saw in his life; that he was the most apt in his answers and solutions of difficult problems of any man of his age he had ever seen; that his answers seem to give more universal satisfaction—so much so that the oldest philosopher would not dispute with him, nor in any manner join issue with him, or ask the second time. I asked Massalian who taught him to read and interpret the law and the prophets.

He said that his mother said that he had always known how to read the law; that his mind seemed to master it from the beginning; and into the laws of nature and the relation of man to his fellow in his teachings or talks, he gives a deeper insight, inspiring mutual love and strengthening the common trust of society.

Another plan he has of setting men right with the laws of nature: he turns nature into a great law book of illustrations, showing that every bush is a flame, every rock a fountain of water, every star a pillar of fire, and every cloud the one that leads to God. He makes all nature preach the doctrine of trust in the divine Fatherhood. He speaks of the lilies as pledges of God's care, and points to the fowls as evidence of his watchfulness over human affairs.

Who can measure the distance between God and the flower of the field? What connection is there between man and the lily?

By such illustrations he creates a solicitude in man that seems to awe him into reverence, and he becomes attracted toward heavenly thought, and feels that he is in the presence of one that is superior. In this talk he brings one to feel he is very near the presence of God. He says:

How much more your Father. The plane is one, though the intermediate points are immeasurably distant. Thus by beginning with a flower he reasons upward to the absolute, and then descends and teaches lessons of trust in a loving Father. The lessons of trust in God reassure the anxious listener and create an appetite that makes him long for more; and it often seems when he has brought his hearers to the highest point of anxiety, he suddenly breaks off and leaves his company as though he cared nothing for them.
Jesus in his talk brings all these illustrations to make man feel his nearness to his kindred, man, teaching also their relation to and dependence upon God; and although his method is happy, it does not seem to me that it is the most successful. He teaches that man and the flowers and birds drink from the same fountain and are fed from the same table, yet at the same time he seems to do everything to excite suspicion and prejudice.

We that are watching him to see his divine mission commence, he is continually tantalizing our expectations, as well as mocking our natural reason and desires. When a man separates himself from all other men, both in point of doctrine as well as discipline, he takes a very great risk on his part especially when he confines God to one channel, and that one of his own dictation.

A man that assumes these responsible positions must have vast resources from which to draw, or he will sink in the whirlpool which his own impertinence has created. Through Jesus in his teachings or talks (his words sound so much like the teachings of Hillel or Shammai that I must call it teaching, though he has no special scholars), we learn that

God is Spirit, and God is Father; and he says: these are the only two things that are essential for man to know.

Then he illustrates this to the parents, and asks them what they would do for their children. He was telling some mothers a circumstance of a mother starving herself to feed her child, and then applied it to God as our Father; and they commenced shouting, they were so happy, and Jesus got up and left the in seeming disgust.

Masalban says he is tempted at times to become impatient with Jesus, as he devotes so much time to details. It seems almost a waste of time for a man who came to save the world to be lingering over a special case of disease. He thinks he could hasten Jesus's physical deportment. Why not speak one word and remove every sick patient from his sick-bed at the same hour? What a triumph this would be.

I asked him if Jesus had healed anyone. He said not as yet; but if he is to be King of the Jews, he was to heal all nations, and why not do it at once? If he would, there would be nothing more required to establish his kingship. But I said to him, Is it not equally so with God's creative power? See what time and labor it takes to bring forth a grain of corn. Why not have caused the earth to bring forth every month instead of every year? He was talking in defense of his Father.

He stated further that Jesus was a young man who was the best judge of human nature he had ever seen; that he thought at times he could tell men their thoughts and expose their bad principles; and while he had all these advantages of life, he seemed not to care for them nor to use them abusively.

He seems to like all men, one as well as another, so much so that his own parents have become disgusted with him, and have almost cast him off. But Jesus has such a peculiar temperament that he seems not to care, and is
as well satisfied with one as another. He said that Jesus seemed fond of Mary and Martha, who lived at Bethany, and probably I might find him there.

Monsallam is a man of very deep thought and most profound judgment. All his life he has made the Scriptures his study. He, too, is a good judge of human nature, and he is satisfied that Jesus is the Christ. He said that Jesus seemed to understand the prophecy by intuition.

I asked him where Jesus was taught to read the prophecy. He said that his mother told him that Jesus could read from the beginning; that no one had ever taught him to read. He said that, in making quotations from the prophets was sometimes mistaken or his memory failed him; but Jesus could correct him every time without the scroll; and that sometimes he thought Jesus was certainly mistaken, but never in a single instance was he wrong. I asked him to describe his person to me, so that I might know him if I should meet him. He said: If you ever meet him you will know him. While he is nothing but a man, there is something about him that distinguishes him from every other man.

He is the picture of his mother, only he has not her smooth, round face. His hair is a little more golden than hers, though it is as much from sunburn as anything else. He is tall, and his shoulders are a little drooped; his visage is thin and of a swarthy complexion, though this is from exposure. His eyes are large and a soft blue, and rather dull and heavy. The lashes are long, and his eyebrows very large. His nose is that of a Jew. In fact, he reminds me of an old-fashioned Jew in every sense of the word.

He is not a great talker, unless there is something brought up about heaven and divine things, when his tongue moves glibly and his eyes light up with a peculiar brilliancy; though there is this peculiarity about Jesus, he never argues a question; he never disputes. He will commence and state facts, and they are on such a solid basis that nobody will have the boldness to dispute with him. Though he has such mastership of judgment, he takes no pride in confuting his opponents, but always seems to be sorry for them.

I have seen him attacked by the scribes and doctors of the law, and they seemed like little children learning their lessons under a master. His strongest points are in the spiritual power of the law and the intentions of the prophets. The young people tried to get him to take a class of them and teach them; but he utterly refused. This Jew is convinced that he is the Messiah of the world.

I went from there to Bethany, but Jesus was not there. They said he and Lazarus were away, they could not tell where. I went and saw Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, and had a long talk with them.

They are very pleasant and nice young maids, and Mary is quite handsome. I teased her about Jesus, but they both denied that Jesus was anything like a lover; he was only a friend; though this is so common for young maids I did not know whether to believe them or not until I told them my real business.

And when I told them that this was the same person that was born of the virgin in Bethlehem some twenty-six years before, and that his mother had told me all the facts in the case, they seemed deeply interested. They then told me upon their honor that Jesus never talked or even hinted to either one of them on the subject of marriage. Martha blushed, and said she wished he had. If he was to be a king, she would nice to be queen.

I asked them if they had ever seen him in the company of young virgins. They said they had not. I asked them if they had heard him talk about young girls, or if he sought their society more than that of men; and they both declared they had not, and they were very much surprised that he did not.

I asked them what he talked of when in their company; and they said he...
was not much in their company; that he and their brother would go upon the house-top and stay there half the night, and sometimes all night, talking and arguing points of interest to them both.

Mary said she had often gone near, so she could listen to them, for she loved to hear him talk, he was so mild and unpretending, and then was so intelligent that he was different from any and all other young men she had ever seen.

I asked them what was their brother's opinion of him. They said he thought there never was such a man on earth. He thought him to be one of God's prophets. He said when they were out in the mountains, as they are most all the time, Jesus can tell him all about the flowers, trees, and rocks, can tell him everything in the world, and that none of the wild animals are afraid of him. He says often the stag and the wolf will come and stand for Jesus to stroke their Mane, and seem almost loath to go away from him.

He says that no poisonous serpent will offer to hiss at him. Their brother thinks he is perfectly safe if Jesus is there. I asked them if he had ever told their brother anything about himself. They said that if he had spoken to their brother he had not told them.

Now, Masters of Israel, after having investigated this matter; after tracing Jesus from his conception to the present time; after obtaining all the information that is to be had on this important subject, getting it from those who are more likely to tell the truth from the fact they are disinterested persons; and then taking a prophetical as well as a historical view of the subject, I have come to the conclusion that this is the Christ that we are looking for. And as a reason for my conclusion, I will call your attention to the following facts:

First, to the prophecy of Isaiah, section 7: And he said, Hear now, saith the Lord. O, house of David, is it a small thing for you? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name God with men, Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good; for before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good the land that God abhorrest shall be forsaken of her king.

Section 8: Bind the testimony; seal the law among his disciples; the Lord will, hide his face from the house of Jacob, and he will look for him.

Here we have the city, the virgin, the office, his manner of life, the seeing him by the Sanhedrin. All these things are under our eyes as full and complete as I now write them, who have all this testimony given in this letter. How can we as a people dispute these things?

In the 49th section of Genesis, making reference to the history, that is now upon us, the writer says:

A captive shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawmaker from him, until Shiloh come, and gather his people between his feet, and keep them forever.

{(GAMALIEL'S INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH AND MARY AND OTHERS CONCERNING JESUS)}