

Thallus and Phlego Still Speak

by Dennis Lange

Thallus was a pagan historian who wrote in the last half of the first century, not many years after the death of Jesus in 33 AD. His history included events in the middle east from the Trojan War to his day. One of the things Thallus wrote about was the darkness at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. The Bible says there was darkness over the whole land for three hours (Matt.28:45). Thallus did not deny that this event had happened, but instead tried to explain what this darkness was.

In 221 AD, a Christian named Julius Africanus referred to Thallus' third book of history concerning this matter. Africanus wrote, "This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as it appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. For the Hebrews celebrate the Passover on the 14th day according to the moon, and the passion of our Savior falls on the day before the Passover; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun. And it cannot happen at any other time but in the interval between the first day of the new moon and the last of the old, that is, at their junction: how then should an eclipse occur when the moon is almost diametrically opposite the sun? Phlegon records that in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth - manifestly that one of which we speak."

The third book of history by Thallus is no longer extant - it no longer exists.

The interesting thing is that this is just as valid as if his work DID still exist. Why?

Africanus could not have argued in 221 about a work of Thallus IF IT DID NOT EXIST AT THAT TIME! I can't pretend in the present to say George Bush said "watermelons are purple" in a book called No Beating Around the G.W. Bush when no one in the present has ever seen such a book.. And, there are people who have lived for 100 years upon this earth who will all testify that THEY have never seen any such thing either!

At the end of the Africanus quote, Phlegon, another historian, is mentioned. Phlegon also recorded the darkness and even gave the correct hours. Both gave testimony to the extended darkness over the whole earth. Thallus tried to explain it away, but failed completely. Africanus, as seen above, gave one irrefutable reason. Another is that an eclipse does not last for three hours!

Thallus and Phlegon still testify about the three hours of darkness at the crucifixion of Jesus, even though their works do not remain. This confirms the Bible story of the crucifixion of Jesus and the supernatural events that surrounded it.

Note: If I recall correctly, other ancient writers also quoted from this work of Thallus that is no longer extant.