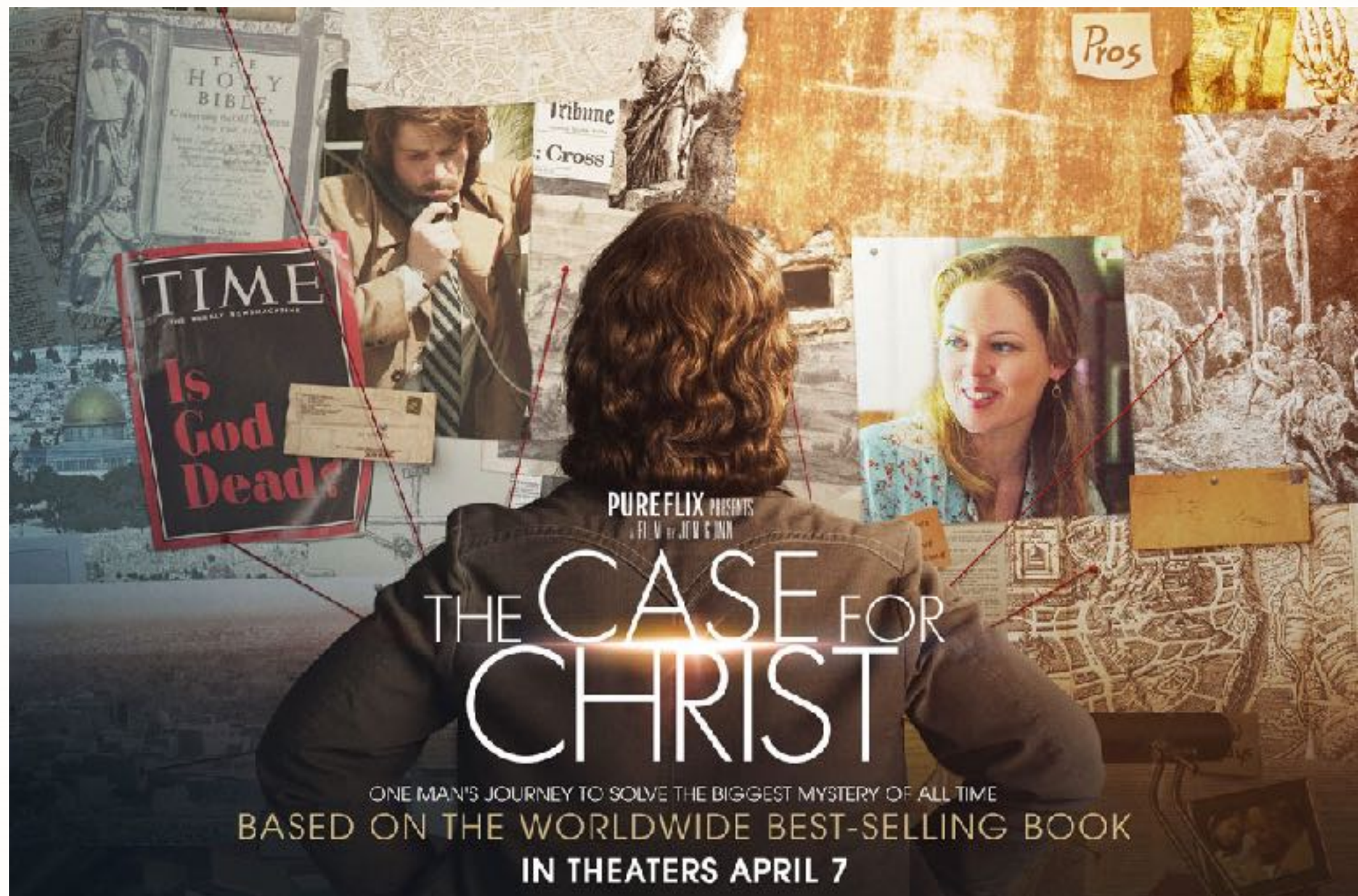


COMFORT IN TRIALS

2 CORINTHIANS 1

THE CASE FOR CHRIST



BACKGROUND

- Upon receiving the corrective letter of 1 Corinthians, the majority of the Corinthian church did not like what they heard from Paul.
- They rejected the teaching they found in his letter and rebelled against his apostolic authority.
- Paul travels to Corinth and follows up with the Corinthians in what he calls the “painful visit” (2:1).

ORDER OF LETTERS

- **First letter:** a smaller letter formerly written to deal with the issue of sexual immorality.
- **Second letter:** 1 Corinthians - dealing with immoral conduct and its relationship to the gospel.
- **Third letter:** Paul's severe letter written after a painful visit.
- **Fourth letter:** 2 Corinthians - expressing great joy at their repentance and a defense of his apostleship.

INTRODUCTION

- After planting the church in Corinth, Paul left the city in order to start other churches.
- After he departed, he received word of divisions, competition, and unhealthy relationships forming in the church that was dear to him.
- That was the reason for Paul's writing 1 Corinthians, which we have been studying.

INTRODUCTION

- So the apostle returned to the church in Corinth in hopes of setting things right.
- The visit did not go as planned. Instead of finding support and an attitude of teachability, Paul was met with strong opposition from one man in particular (mentioned in 2:5 and 7:12) and open rebellion.
- Described as the “painful visit” in 2 Corinthians 2:1, this event was devastating to Paul.

GOD COMFORTS US SO
WE CAN COMFORT
OTHERS

2 CORINTHIANS 1-7

PURPOSE OF LETTER

- Three purposes of the letter:
- To strengthen the faithful majority and the purity of the church (chapters 1–7).
- To complete the collection as the expression of their repentance (chapters 8–9).
- To offer the rebellious minority one more chance to repent before Paul returns (chapters 10–13).

COMFORT IN AFFLICTION

- We see a major aspect to Paul's joy in the Gospel: comfort in affliction.
- The fact that Paul is familiar with suffering and finds something positive to come from it is a point of contention between the apostle and his adversaries.
- Paul's opponents pointed to the fact that he endured a significant amount of suffering, too much suffering for an apostle of the risen Christ.

COMFORT IN AFFLICTION

- Suffering is a reality for the believer, but there is good news: God provides comfort in times of affliction.
- It's a comfort that we cannot produce on our own. God of all comfort is its source (v. 3).
- Whether God provides deliverance from the affliction or encouragement and peace through the affliction. Bottom line: God provides comfort.

COMFORT IN AFFLICTION

- This comfort is meant to be passed on to others (v. 4).
- The comfort and past / present / future affliction that a believer experiences is meant to benefit others.
- God wants us to share our lives together in order that we comfort and encourage one another through affliction that we ourselves have previously experienced in our affliction.

CHRIST'S SUFFERING

- Be confident in what the Lord has taken you through so that you can comfort others and walk with them.
- When Christians bring comfort to one another through their own experiences, it is the very conduit through which God then brings divine comfort.
- Paul mentions sharing abundantly in Christ's sufferings (referring to the suffering that Christians will endure because of their relationship to Christ).

RELY ON GOD'S STRENGTH

2 CORINTHIANS 8-11

PAUL'S TESTIMONY

- Verse 8 is a moment of great transparency for Paul.
- His desire is not to keep the reality of his affliction hidden, but to bear the weight of his affliction to his fellow brothers and sisters.
- This is a great lesson for us. Paul doesn't shy away from honesty or try to make the situation sound better than it was.

PAUL'S TESTIMONY

- Paul has a unique perspective concerning the situation.
- He says it was for the greater purpose to show God's ability to rescue in the very situations where we can do nothing.
- This circumstance "forced him to abandon self-reliance and to trust in God's power" (verse 9).

PAUL'S TESTIMONY

- The main point of Paul's encouragement: God is faithful to comfort and rescue.
- That can be through the gift of perseverance during a hardship, or the release from the difficult circumstance.
- Whatever happens, God is able. This is Paul's focus in verse 10. God has acted faithfully before and he will continue to do so, no matter the circumstance.

QUESTIONS

RIDE DONKEY?

- Question: Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey for Palm Sunday instead of a horse?
- We read about this in Matthew 21 - Jesus sends two disciples to a village to get a donkey with a colt beside it. He told them to bring them so that he can ride the donkey on His way to Jerusalem.
- So why didn't he ride a magnificent horse into Jerusalem rather than a lowly donkey?

RIDE DONKEY?

- First, this was a fulfillment of prophecy.
- In Zechariah 9:9-10, it describes a king who will be “righteous and having salvation.” This is an image of a king who will bring peace.
- The next verse contrasts that with “the chariots of Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem.”
- Jesus is the humble king who will bring peace.

RIDE DONKEY?

- Second, it followed the tradition of the ancient world.
- A leader would ride in on a horse if he was coming in war. He would ride a donkey to signify peace.
- Solomon rode a donkey (1 Kings 1:33) on the day he was recognized as the new king of Israel
- We find other instances of leaders riding donkeys (Judges 5:10; 10:4; 12:14; and 2 Samuel 16:2).

RIDE DONKEY?

- Third, Jesus used a donkey to connect with people.
- Roman soldiers rode horses, and that became a symbol of oppression. Jews were living under Roman rule.
- Riding a donkey connected with the poor, sick, and downtrodden in Israel. It was one more way of saying that the Messiah came to serve and save the oppressed.

RICH OR POOR?

- Question: Was Jesus family wealthy or poor?
- This is an important question in some Christian circles where the prosperity gospel is preached.
- They teach that Jesus was so rich that Judas had to carry all his wealth in a money bag (John 12:6).
- This contradicts what Jesus said in Luke 9:58 - "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head."

RICH OR POOR?

- The family of Jesus does not appear to be wealthy.
- We can conclude that just by looking at the details of His birth (born in a manger, feeding trough, visited by shepherds).
- Luke 2:22-24 reports that Mary and Joseph offered 2 pigeons as a temple sacrifice. Leviticus 12:7-8 explains that the usual sacrifice was a lamb. Only would the birth mother offer turtledoves or pigeons if she could not afford a lamb.

RICH OR POOR?

- There is some indication that the economic status of Mary and Joseph improved (Matthew 2:11).
- They have enough financial stability to travel as a family to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast.
- This journey was only required of adult males (Exodus 23:17), yet the whole family made the trip.
- Nazareth was near the luxurious Roman vacation spot (Sepphoris) and likely needed carpenters.

RICH OR POOR?

- The ministry of Jesus showed He had few material possessions:
 - He preached in borrowed boats.
 - He multiplied borrowed food.
 - He rode on a borrowed animal.
 - He was buried in a borrowed tomb.

RICH OR POOR?

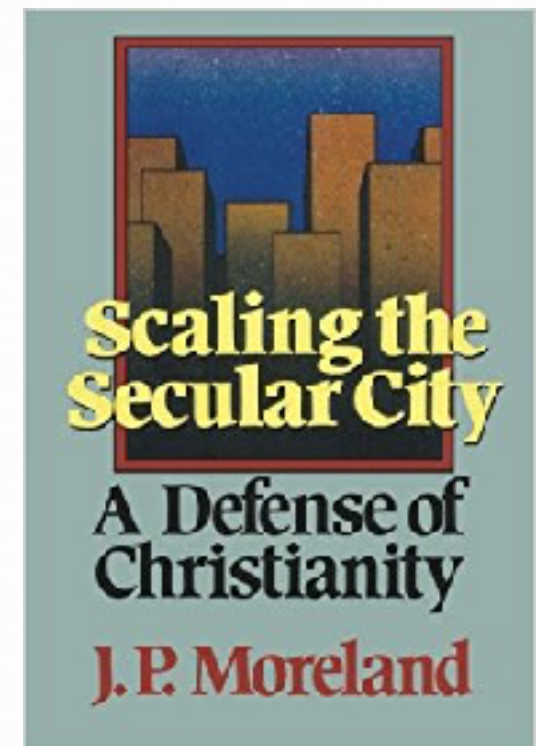
- We do learn from the gospels who provided for the material needs of Jesus and the disciples.
- Luke (8:2-3) records that Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna provided for them “out of their means.”
- Jesus did minister to many wealthy and powerful people: Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, Levi, and Joseph of Arimathea. His first miracle was at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-12) and he received costly perfume from Mary (John 12:1-3).

RESURRECTION?

- Question: Are there other faiths or religions that claim their leader had a resurrection from death that was testified to?
- The simple answer is that there is nothing like this in any other religion.
- But, that does not stop skeptics from pointing to similar stories of pagan gods dying and rising. They argue that the early church borrowed these myths.

RESURRECTION?

- The German “History of Religion School” argued that the early church borrowed from ancient pagan myths to create the Jesus of the Bible.
- Scholarship over the last 100+ years has thoroughly refuted this idea.



RESURRECTION?

- First, there is a long gap in time between the original recording of these pagan myths and when they supposedly occurred.
- That is not the case with Christianity.
- Second, there is good evidence that most of these pagan myths about a pagan god rising from death were actually written or added after the New Testament writings were completed.

RESURRECTION?

- Third, most of these pagan religions were syncretistic (blending other religions with their beliefs).
- Early Christianity (like Judaism) was very exclusive and did not borrow from other religions.
- Fourth, myth writers did not expect readers to take them literally.
- The Gospel writers wrote as if they were recording real history.

RESURRECTION?

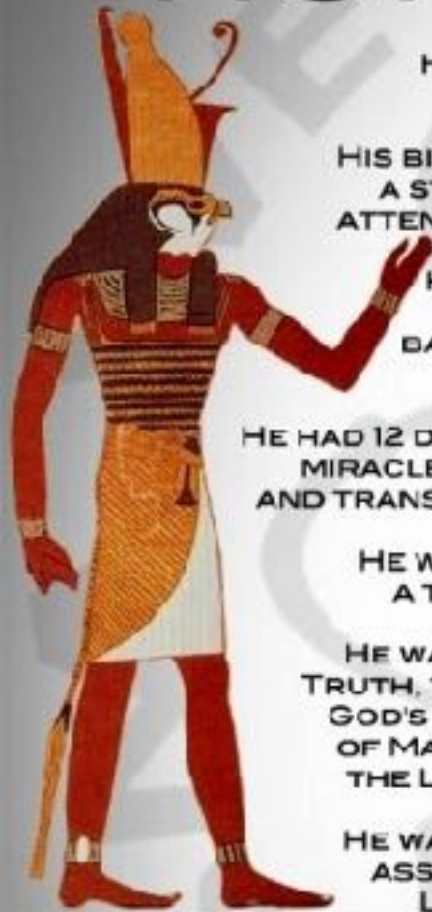
- **Adonis** - was the Greek god of beauty who was killed by a wild boar that was sent by Artemis. When he died, Aphrodite poured nectar over his blood, and the flower anemone emerged.
- **Osiris** - was an Egyptian god that was murdered and dismembered with pieces scattered. Later the pieces were collected and reassembled (one piece missing) so that he became a powerful god in the underworld.

RESURRECTION?

- **Horus** - was the son of Osiris and bitten by a poisonous snake, and later healed by his mother Isis. This is not a resurrection to immortality nor is it a sacrificial death for others.
- **Mithras** - has been called the pagan Jesus because of some similarities. He was not born of a virgin, but born of a rock. In Mithraism, there is no death and resurrection. There is good evidence that Mithraism borrowed from Christianity, not the other way around.

MYTHOLOGY

HORUS



HE WAS BORN OF A VIRGIN
ON DECEMBER 25TH

HIS BIRTH WAS ANNOUNCED BY
A STAR IN THE EAST AND WAS
ATTENDED BY THREE WISE MEN.

HE WAS A CHILD TEACHER
IN THE TEMPLE AND WAS
BAPTIZED WHEN HE WAS 30
BY 'ANUP THE BAPTIZER'

HE HAD 12 DISCIPLES, HE PERFORMED
MIRACLES, HE WALKED ON WATER,
AND TRANSFIGURED ON THE MOUNT.

HE WAS CRUCIFIED, BURIED IN
A TOMB AND RESURRECTED.

HE WAS CALLED "THE WAY, THE
TRUTH, THE LIGHT, THE MESSIAH,
GOD'S ANOINTED SON, THE SON
OF MAN, THE GOOD SHEPHERD,
THE LAMB OF GOD, THE WORD"

HE WAS "THE FISHER," AND WAS
ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAMB,
LION AND FISH ("ICHTHYS").

MITHRAS

HE WAS BORN OF A VIRGIN
ON DECEMBER 25TH.

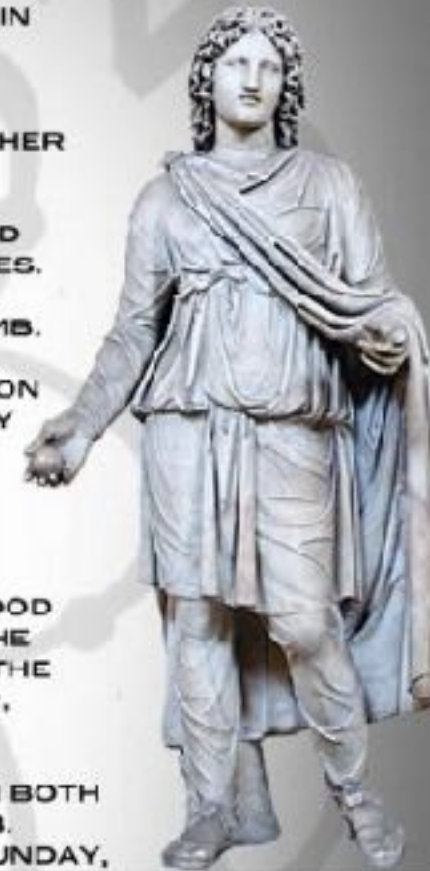
HE WAS CONSIDERED A
GREAT TRAVELING TEACHER
AND MASTER.

HE HAD 12 DISCIPLES AND
HE PERFORMED MIRACLES.

HE WAS BURIED IN A TOMB.
AFTER 3 DAYS HE ROSE
AGAIN. HIS RESURRECTION
WAS CELEBRATED EVERY
YEAR DURING HIS
PRINCIPAL FESTIVAL,
HELD ON WHAT WOULD
BECOME EASTER.

HE WAS CALLED "THE GOOD
SHEPHERD, THE WAY, THE
TRUTH AND THE LIGHT, THE
REDEEMER, THE SAVIOR,
THE MESSIAH."

HE WAS IDENTIFIED WITH BOTH
THE LION AND THE LAMB.
HIS SACRED DAY WAS SUNDAY.



**FROM VIRGIN BIRTH TO RESURRECTION,
THE STORY OF JESUS CHRIST
IS MERELY A RETELLING OF
THE STORIES OF GODS WHO
PREDATED HIM BY HUNDREDS
OF YEARS.**



HORUS

5,000 YEARS AGO



- X BORN OF A VIRGIN
- X STAR IN THE EAST
- X WALKED ON WATER
- X HEALED THE SICK
- X RESTORED SIGHT
- X CRUCIFIED
- X DEAD FOR 3 DAYS
- X RESURRECTED

Fact Check!

MOTHER (ISIS) MARRIED HER BROTHER. SHE WASN'T A VIRGIN. NO HISTORICAL REFERENCE TO A "STAR IN THE EAST" NOR TO HORUS "WALKING ON WATER". THESE ARE MADE UP. A SPELL WAS BELIEVED TO POSSESS SICK EGYPTIANS BY HORUS WHO WOULD THEN BE HEALED BY ISIS AND THOTH. HORUS WAS NEVER CRUCIFIED NOR RESURRECTED. ACTUALLY, HE NEVER EVEN DIED! THE STORY IS THAT HE "MERGED" WITH THE SUN GOD, RA.



MITHRA

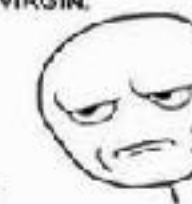
3,200 YEARS AGO



- X BORN OF A VIRGIN
- X BORN ON DECEMBER 25
- X STAR IN THE EAST
- X HAD 12 DISCIPLES
- X PERFORMED MIRACLES
- X DEAD FOR 3 DAYS
- X RESURRECTED

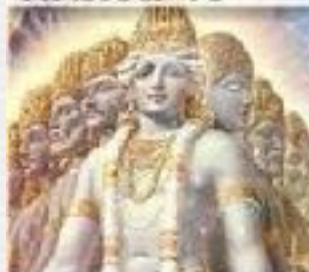
Fact Check!

MITHRA WAS BORN FULLY-GROWN FROM SOLID ROCK, NOT A VIRGIN. MITHRA'S BIRTH VARIES FROM SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER. NO HISTORICAL REFERENCE TO A "STAR IN THE EAST". NO HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF MITHRA HAVING 12 DISCIPLES. (ALL MYTHOLOGICAL GODS PERFORMED MIRACLES) THERE'S NO KNOWN REFERENCE OF HIM HAVING EVEN DIED, LET ALONE ANY RECORD OF A BELIEF IN HIS RESURRECTION.



KRISHNA

2,900 YEARS AGO



- X BORN OF A VIRGIN
- X STAR IN THE EAST
- X PERFORMED MIRACLES
- X CALLED "SON OF GOD"
- X SON OF A CARPENTER
- X RESURRECTED

Fact Check!

KRISHNA WAS THE 8TH SON OF THE ROYAL MATHURA FAMILY, DEVAKI, HIS MOTHER, WAS NOT A VIRGIN AND VASUDEVA, HIS FATHER, WAS NOT A CARPENTER. NO HISTORICAL REFERENCE TO A "STAR IN THE EAST" NOR MENTION OF A RESURRECTION IN ANY LITERATURE. AS WITH MOST MYTHOLOGICAL GODS, THERE ARE SOME REFERENCES TO HIM PERFORMING MIRACLES.



DIONYSUS

2,500 YEARS AGO



- X BORN OF A VIRGIN
- X BORN ON DECEMBER 2
- X TRAVELING TEACHER
- X TURNED WATER INTO WINE
- X CALLED "HOLY CHILD"

Fact Check!

HIS MOTHER WAS A MORTAL IMPREGNATED BY ZEUS IN PERSON. HE DIED EACH WINTER AND RESURRECTED EACH SPRING WITH NO MENTION OF ANY DATE IN DECEMBER. NO REFERENCE OF HIM CALLED A TRAVELING TEACHER NOR A HOLY CHILD. DIONYSUS WAS THE GREEK GOD OF WINE. SO NATURALLY, HE TURNED WATER TO WINE IN PLENTY OF STORIES.



JESUS CHRIST

2,000 YEARS AGO



ALL OF THE ABOVE

Baseless claims...

JESUS' BIRTH DATE IS UNKNOWN, BELIEVED TO BE IN THE SPRING OR EARLY SUMMER. THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH JUST SET DECEMBER 25 AS THE FEAST DAY OF HIS BIRTH TO "BAPTIZE" WHAT HAD FORMERLY BEEN A PAGAN HOLIDAY. ALL THESE CLAIMS GAINED A LOT OF POPULARITY FROM THE 2007 CONSPIRACY PROPAGANDA FILM "ZEITGEIST" AND ITS ARTICULATION OF THE JESUS MYTH HYPOTHESIS. THESE "FACTS" ARE ALMOST ENTIRELY FABRICATED.



CHRISTIANS
Y U NOT AT LEAST ORIGINAL?

ATHEISTS
Y U NOT AT LEAST FACT CHECK?

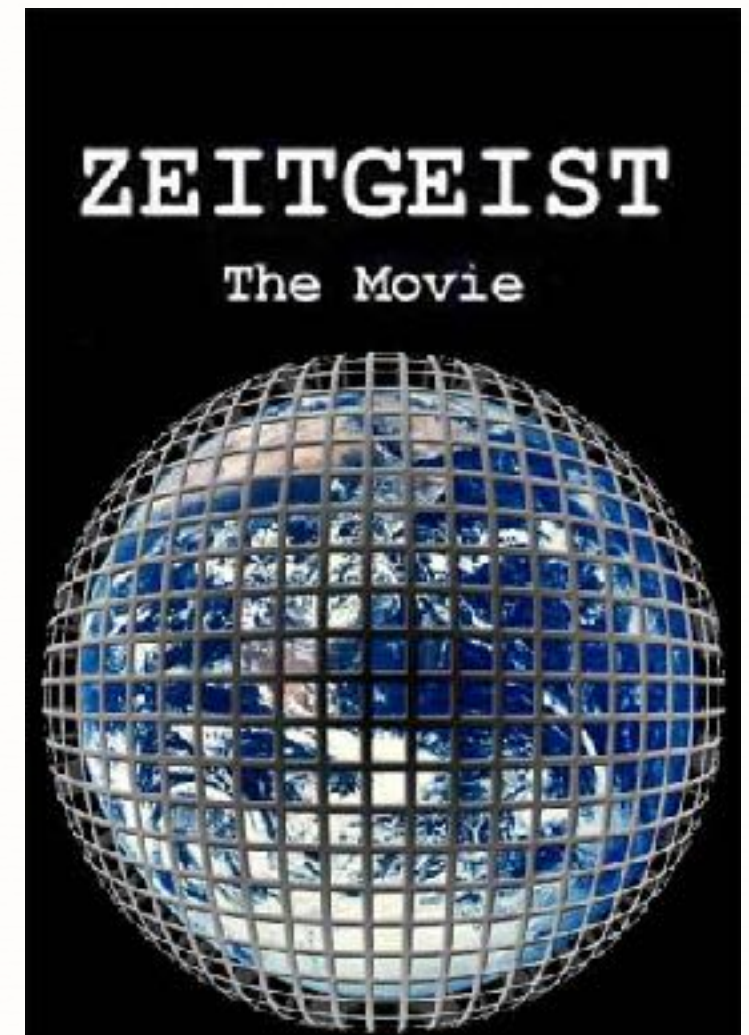
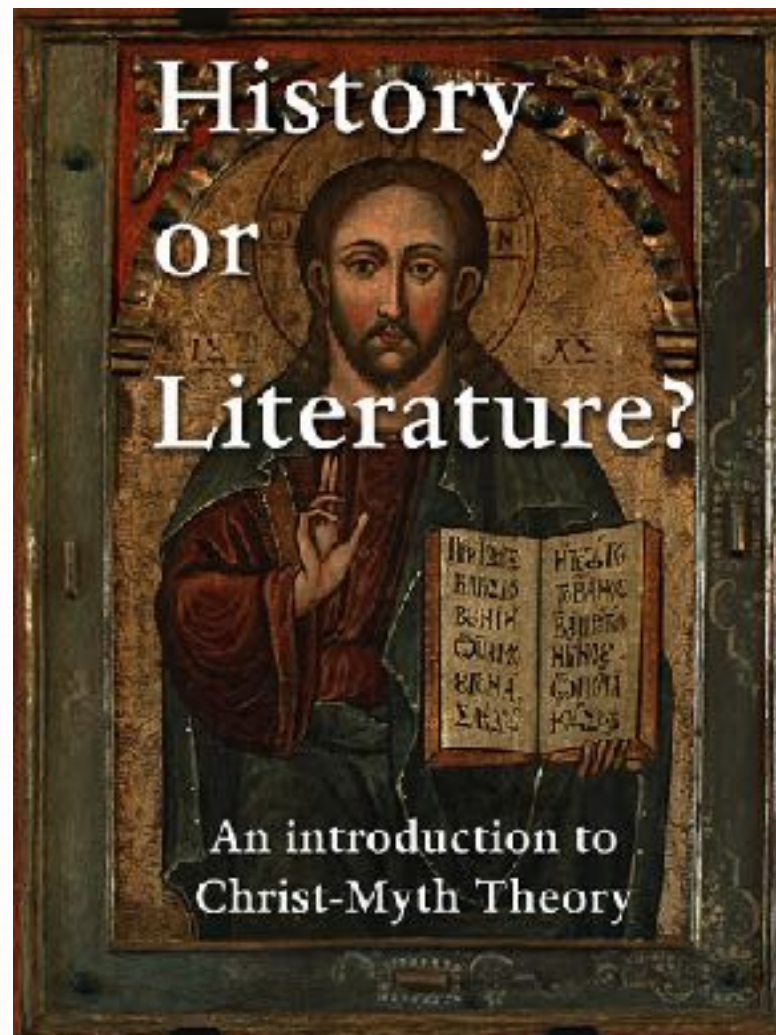
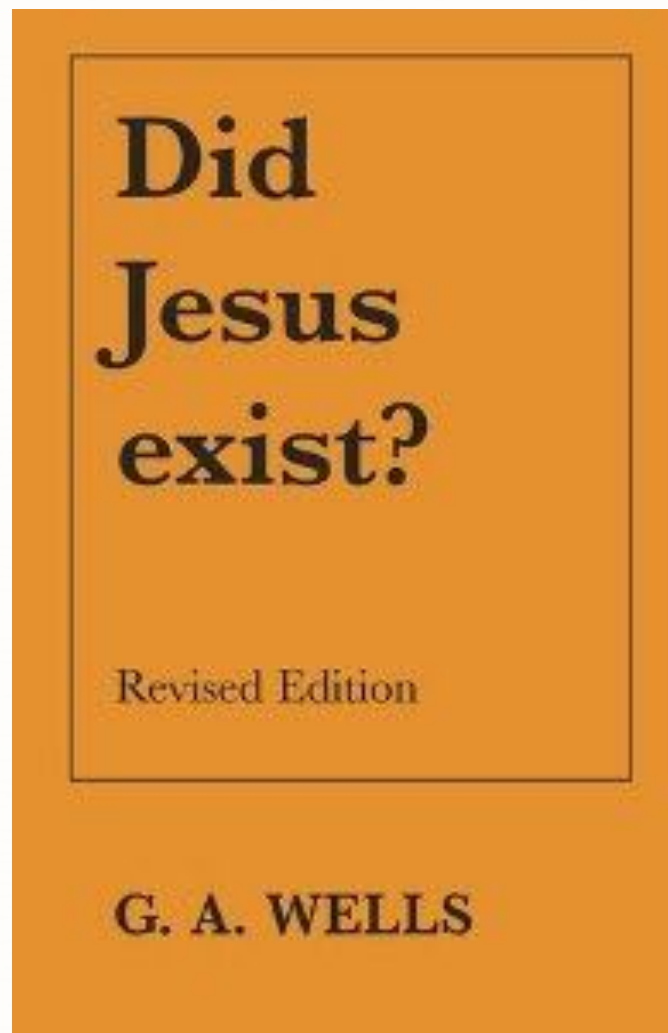


RESURRECTION?

“There is, as far as I am aware, no prima facie evidence that the death and resurrection of Jesus is a mythological construct, drawing on the myths and rites of the dying and rising gods of the surrounding world. While studied with profit against the background of Jewish resurrection belief, the faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus retains its unique character in the history of religions.”

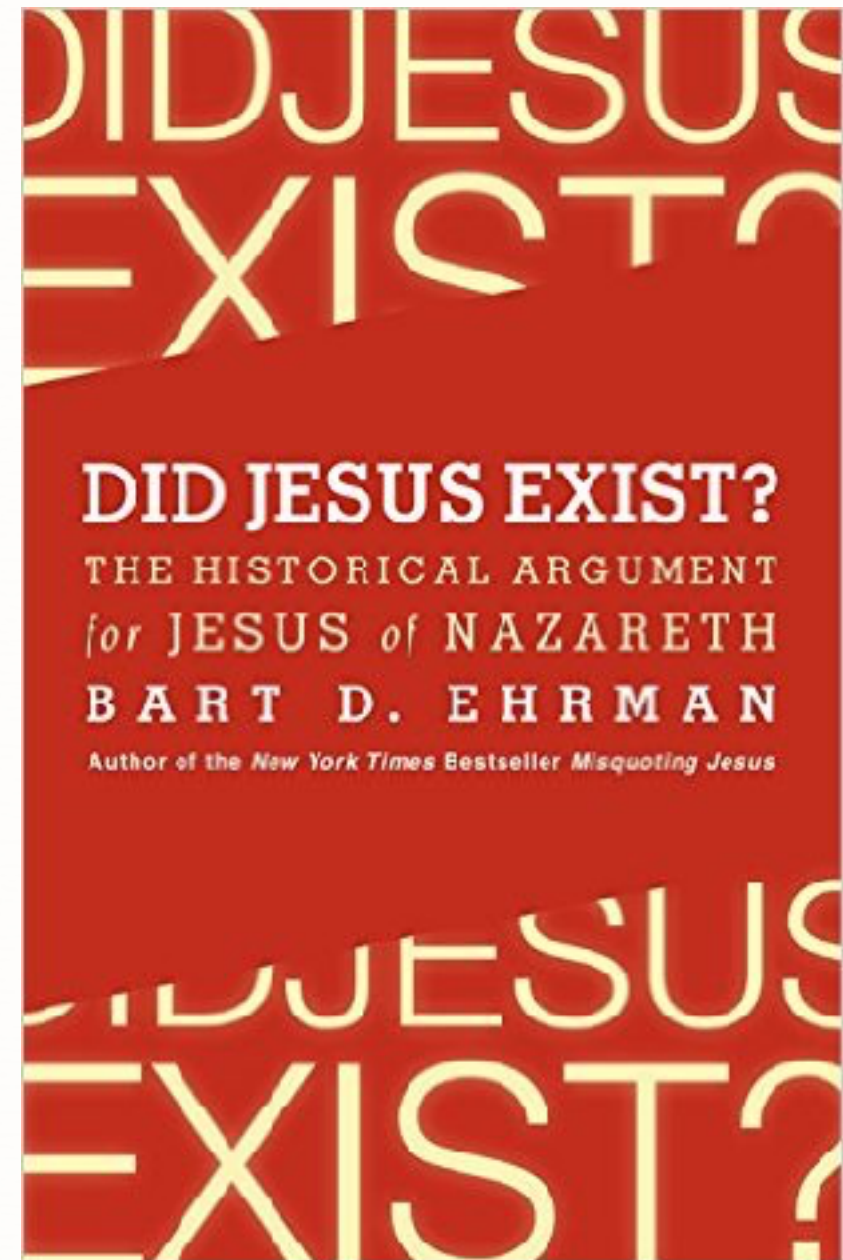
Swedish Scholar and Professor T.N.D. Mettinger

IS JESUS A MYTH?



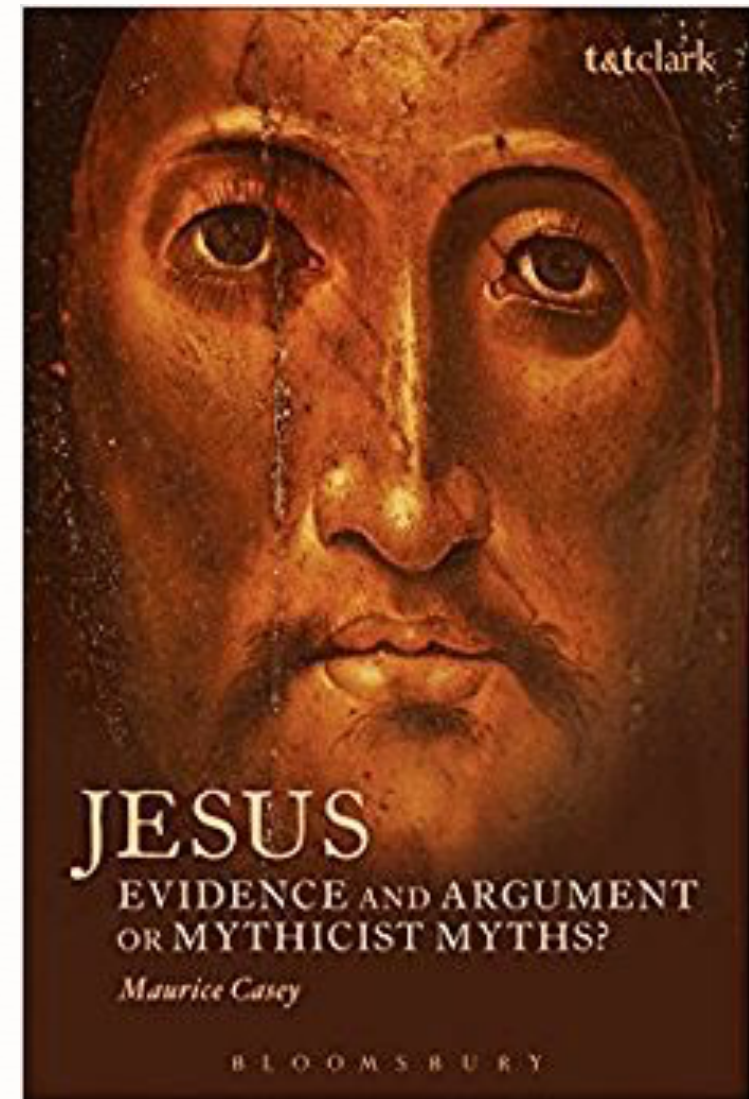
IS JESUS A MYTH?

- Bart Ehrman has written many books attempting to discredit the credibility of the New Testament and orthodox Christianity.
- Nevertheless, he rejects the Jesus Myth Hypothesis and says no serious historian should deny that Jesus actually existed.



IS JESUS A MYTH?

- Maurice Casey is an agnostic who argues that the mythicists have no semblance of an unbiased historical method.
- They date the Gospels a full century later than the dates accepted by critical scholars.
- They need these late dates to give their theories credibility.

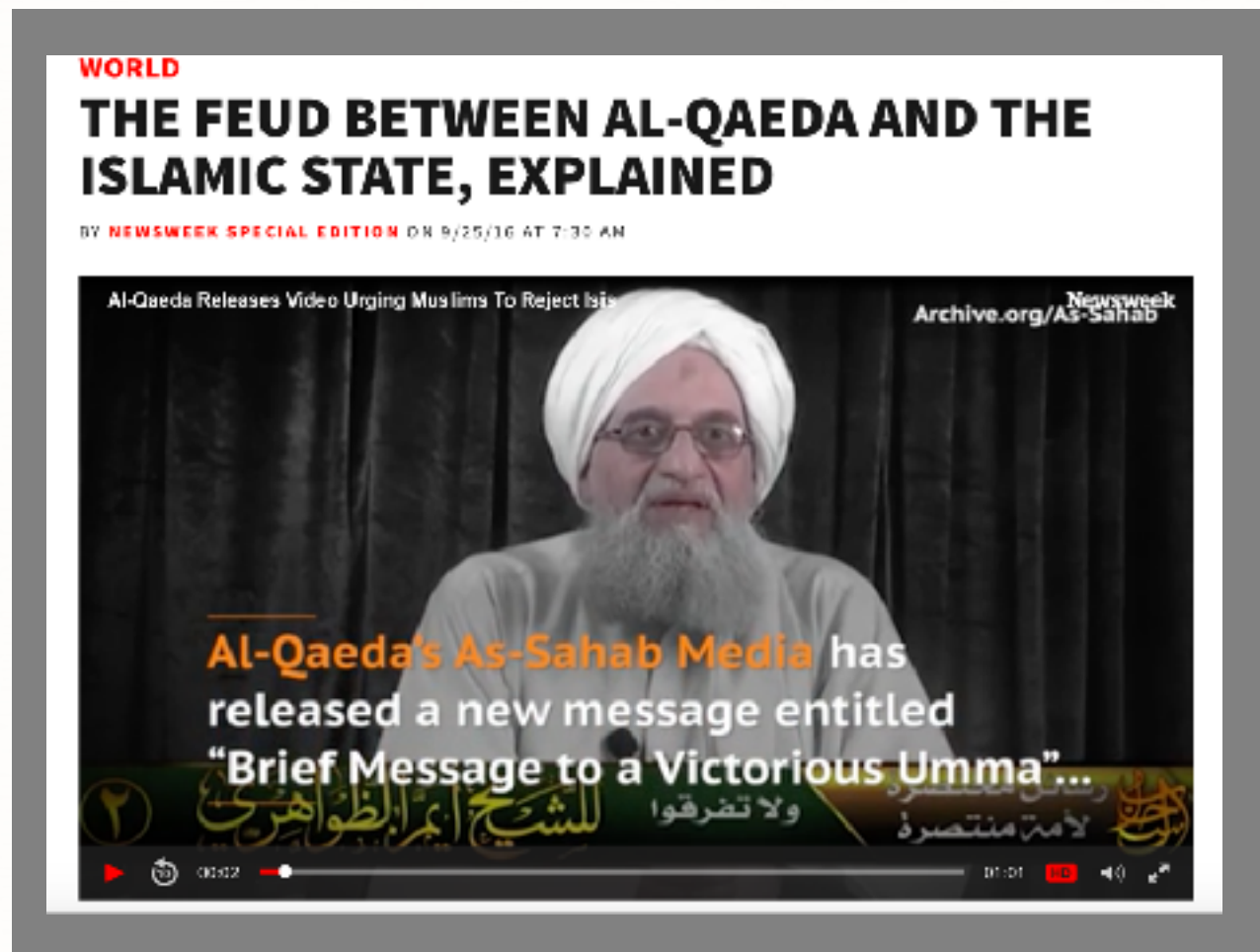


IS JESUS A MYTH?

- First, the Gospels were written down during a time when eyewitnesses who knew Jesus were still alive.
- Second, the New Testament includes early creeds (1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 5:15, etc.) that speak of the deity and resurrection of Jesus.
- Jewish (Josephus) and Roman historians (Tacitus, Pliny) also provide a short record of Jesus completely apart from the New Testament (www.probe.org).

ISIS AND PROPHECY?

- Question: ISIS and al Qaeda may be joining forces. Is that prophecy in the Bible?



ISIS AND PROPHECY?

- Two major divisions in Islam:
- Sunnis - followers of the Sunna (they follow the example or practice of Muhammed).
- Shi'ites - partisans (shia) of Ali, (they follow those in the line of Muhammed's son-in-law).



ISIS AND PROPHECY?

Lines in the Sand: Shiites as % of Muslim Population



ISIS AND PROPHECY?

- During the 1990s, al Qaeda (the base) carried out various attacks overseas (Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Tanzania) and then in the U.S. (attack on 9/11).
- After 2001, al Qaeda became a franchise operation. The leaders in Iraq was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.
- ISIS filled the power vacuum when al-Zarqawi was killed. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became the head of the Islamic State of Iraq.

AL-BAGHDADI



ISIS THEOLOGY

- July 4, 2014 - Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was proclaimed at the Mosque in Mosul as the “Caliph Ibrahim” and leader of the Islamic State.
- “Fear Allah as he should be feared and do not die except as Muslims. . . . Go forth, O mujahidin in the path of Allah. Terrify the enemies of Allah and seek death.... for the dunyā will come to an end, and the hereafter will last forever.”

EZEKIEL 38:1-6

“Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. And I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armor, a great host, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords. Persia, Cush, and Put are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all his hordes; Beth-togarmah from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes—many peoples are with you.”

EZEKIEL 38

Rosh	Russia
Magog	Central Asia
Meshech & Tubal	Turkey
Persia	Iran
Cush (Ethiopia)	Sudan
Put	Libya
Gomer	Turkey
Beth-togarmah	Turkey

EZEKIEL 38

