

APOLOGETICS WITH CHRISTIANS & THEISTS

Ministry Formation
Diocese of Rockford

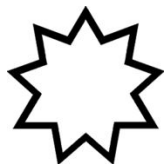
A Prayer Before Study

St. Thomas Aquinas

O God, Creator of all things, true source of light and wisdom, graciously let a ray of your light penetrate the darkness of my understanding. Give me a keen intellect, a retentive memory, and the ability to grasp things correctly and fundamentally. Give me the talent of being exact in my explanations and the ability to express myself with thoroughness and charm. Point out the beginning, direct the progress, and perfect my work. We ask you this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

What happens when you compare Christianity with

Baha'i: Mīrzā Ḥosayn = the Báb



Hinduism: No founder

Buddhism: Siddhartha Gautama



Islam: Muhammad.

Christianity: Jesus of Nazareth



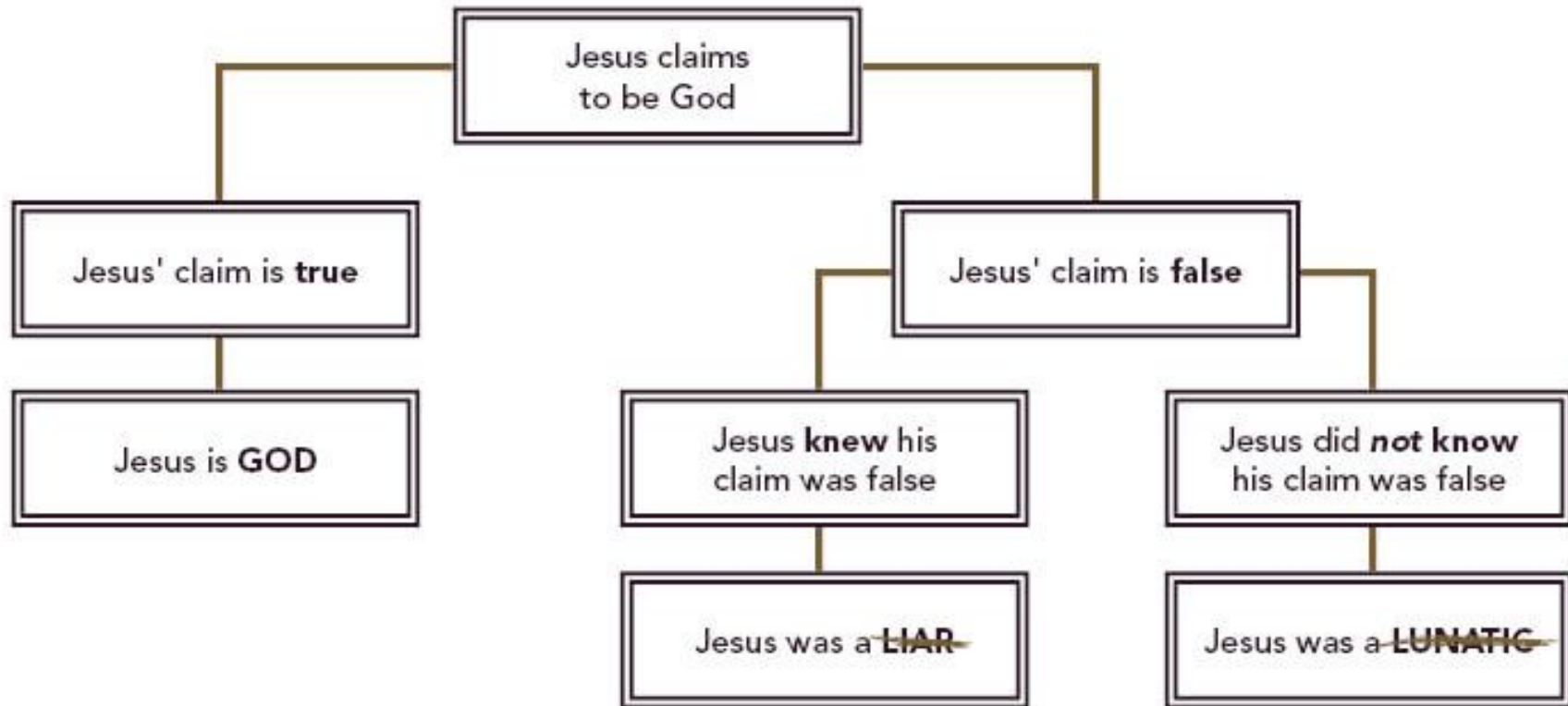
Confucianism: Confucius



Judaism: Major figures - Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, etc.

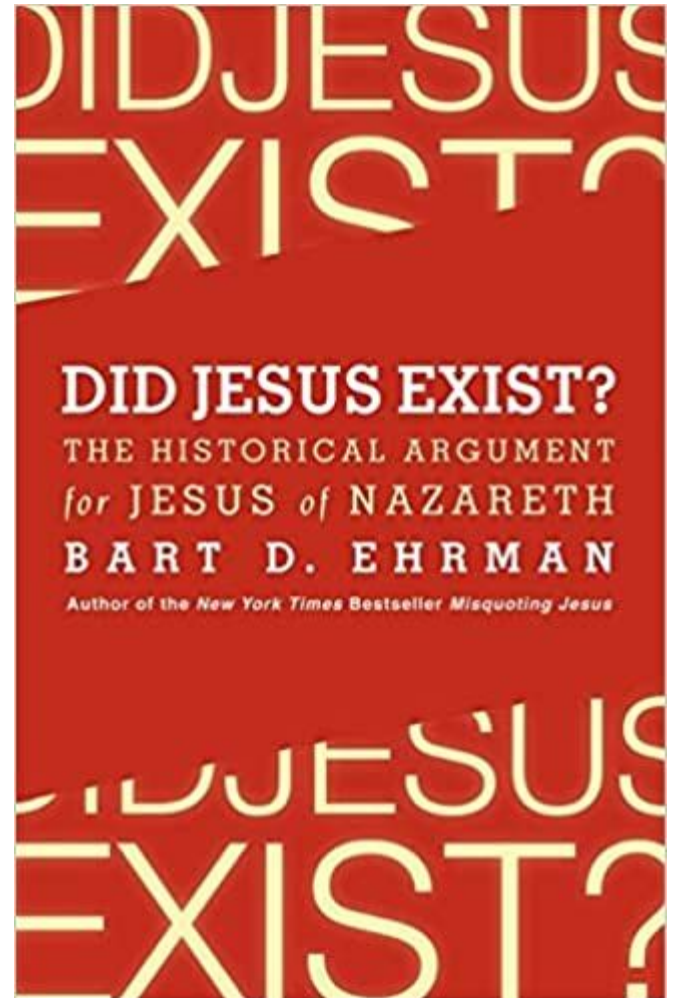
**"WHO DO MEN SAY THAT
THE SON OF MAN IS?"**

"WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?"



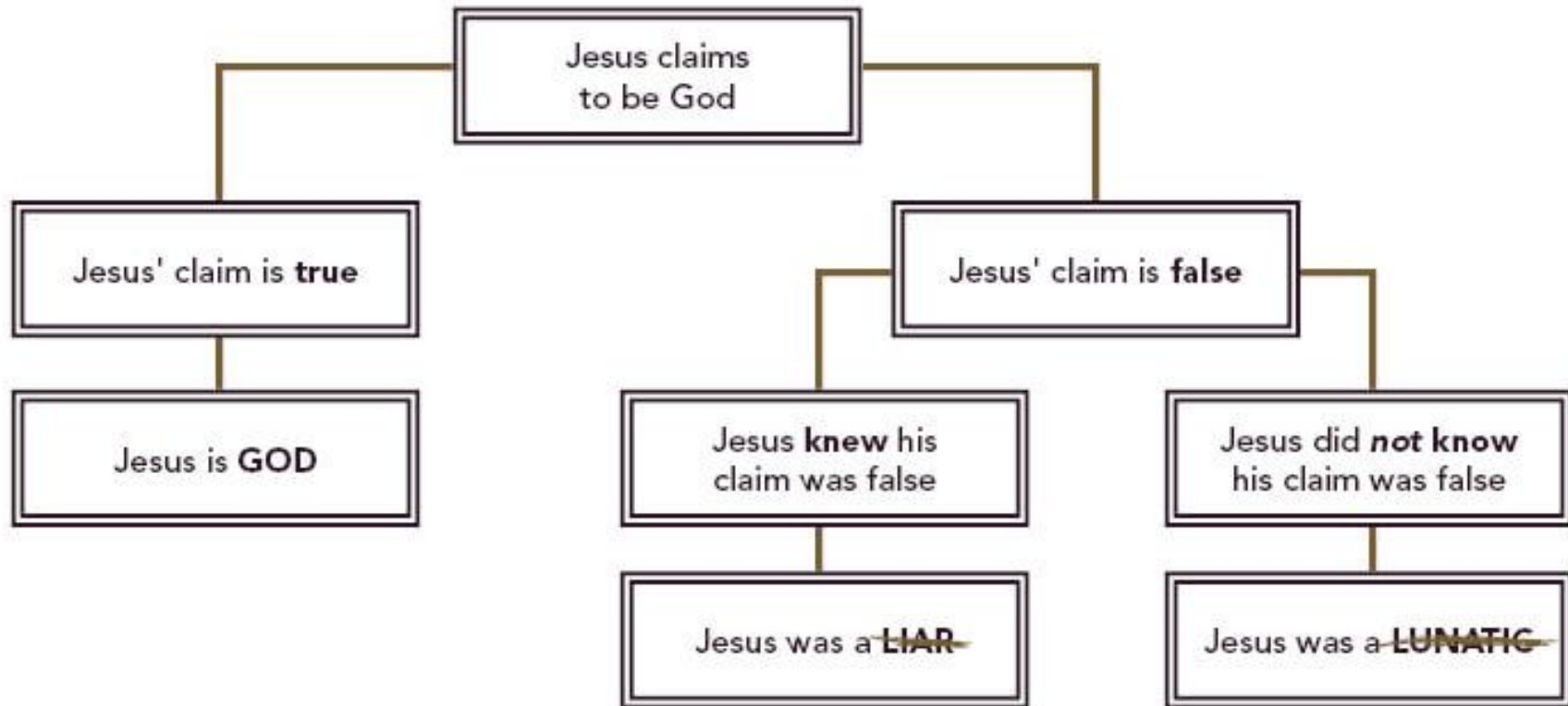
LEGEND?

- It is the mainstream position in academia
- Jesus' existence is confirmed by extra-Biblical sources.
- The Early Church Fathers don't describe the mythicist heresy
- St. Paul knew the disciples of Jesus, including Jesus' brother James



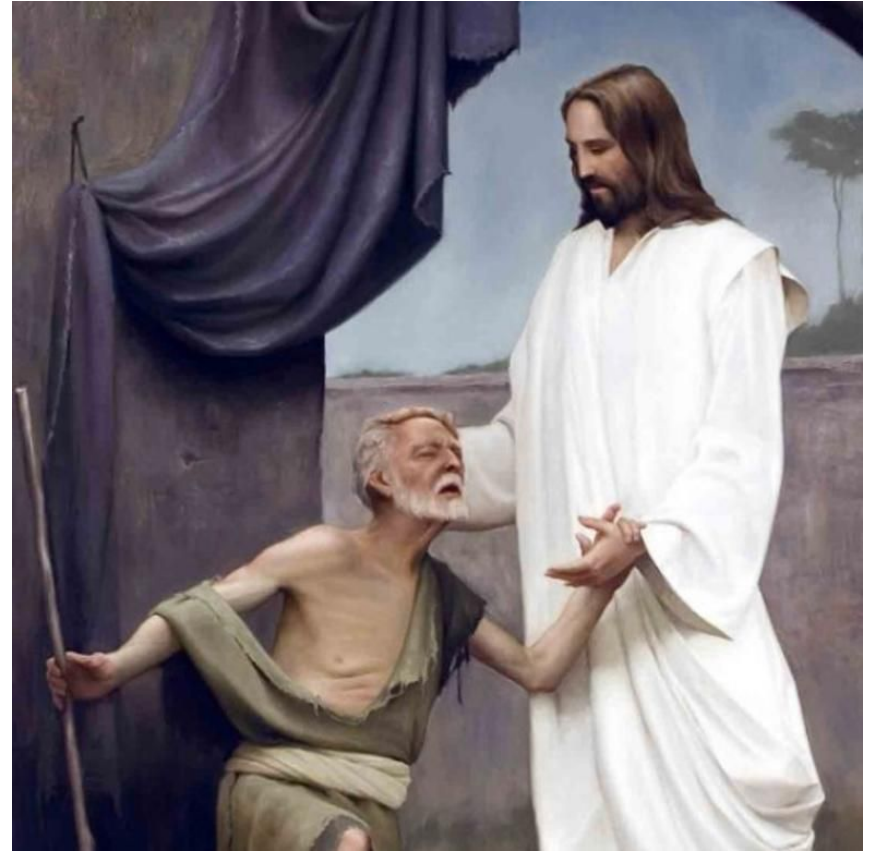
Best-attested historical fact about Jesus? He had a reputation as a miracle-worker:

- About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, ~~if indeed one ought to call him a man.~~ For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. ~~He was the Messiah.~~ And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. ~~He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about him.~~ And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared. (Josephus)



Jesus' Miracles

Involve an implicit divine claim
not from the mere fact of the
miracles themselves, but from
the fact that they are not
attributed to the power of
another



Teaching with Authority

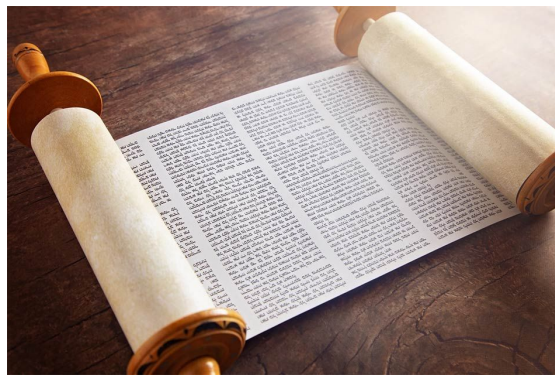
Jesus places himself on a level
with the divine Legislator
Himself

*“You have heard that it was said . . .
but I say to you.”*



Jesus Declares Himself Greater than the Temple & Torah

Matt. 12:6



The Power to Forgive Sins

*“Who can forgive sins but God
Himself?”*



Jesus Demands Faith & Love in His Person

“Believe in God, believe also in me”



The Stilling of the Storm

A storm rises on the Sea of Galilee, and the disciples become afraid of perishing and wake Jesus from his sleep. In response, Jesus rebukes the wind and sea, calming the storm, leading them to ask: "Who is this?"



Over & again, the OT emphasizes how the God of the universe displays his power by controlling *the wind & the sea*.

Stilling the Storm & the Divinity of Jesus

The LORD Stills the Storm

1. Sailors in ships
2. Stormy wind and waves
3. Courage melts away
4. Cry out to the Lord
5. The LORD stills the storm
6. Waves of the sea “quiet”

(Psalm 107)

Jesus Stills the Storm

1. Disciples in boats
2. Stormy wind and waves
3. Disciples are afraid
4. Cry out to Jesus
5. Jesus stills the storm
6. There was a “great calm”

(Matthew 8, Mark 4, Luke 8)

*“Who then is this, that
even wind and sea
obey him?”*

He manifests the
same power that God
showed over creation

The Walking on Water: “*I Am*”

Jesus walks on the Sea of Galilee in the midst of wind and waves, and when the disciples see him and become afraid, he says to them: “I am; do not be afraid.”

“*I am*” (Gr. *ego eimi*) = He is revealing his divine identity

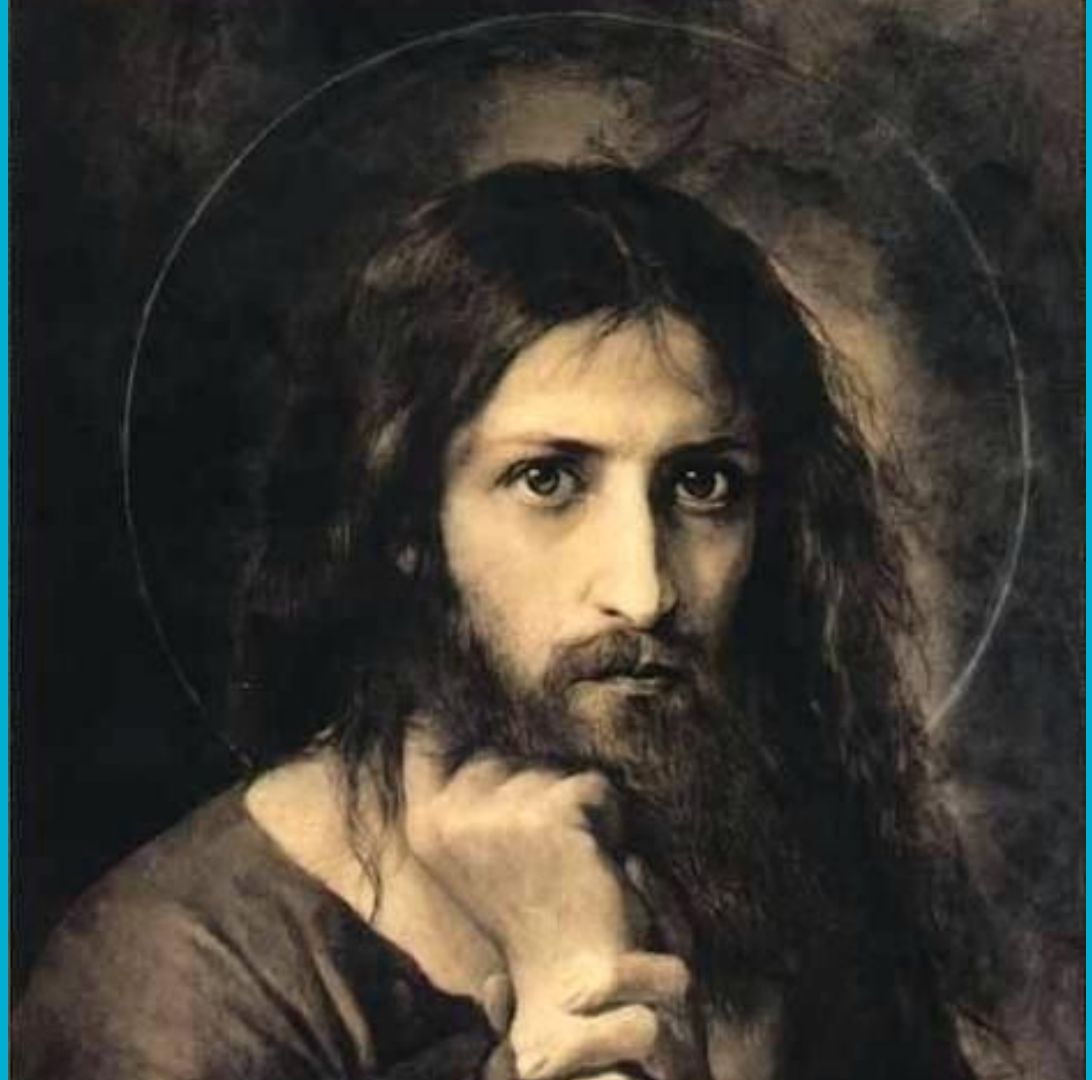


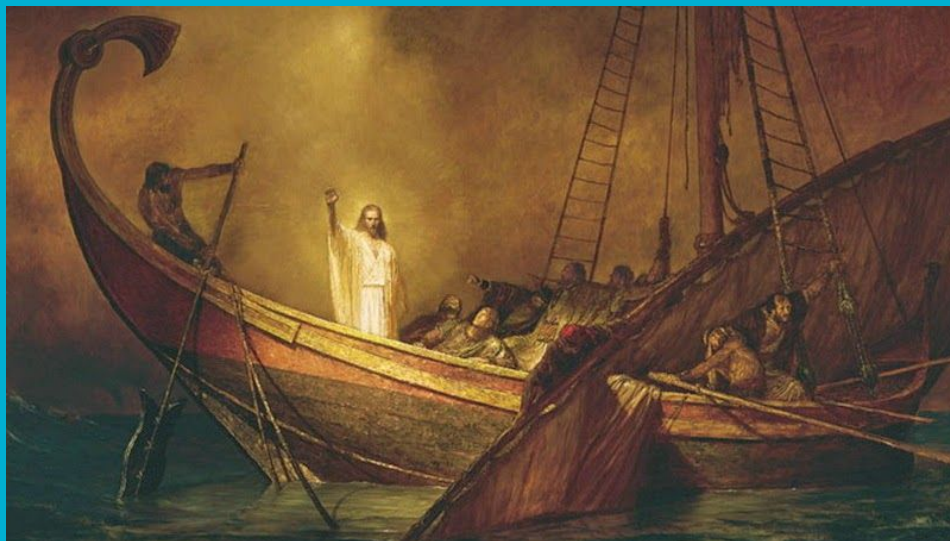
—“*He meant to pass by them . . .*”

[The LORD said to Moses:] “I will make all my goodness *pass before you*, and will proclaim before you *my name ‘The LORD’* . . . The LORD *passed before him*, and proclaimed, ‘*The LORD, the LORD* , a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness (Exod. 33, 34)

[God said to Elijah:] “Go forth,
and stand upon the mount of the
LORD.” And behold, *the LORD*
passed by. (1 Kings 19:11)

Jesus is
portrayed
as *divine*.





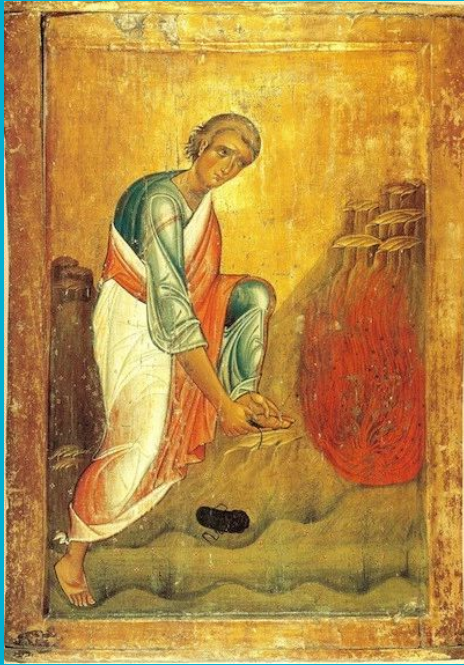
*“And those in the
boat worshiped him,
saying, “Truly you
are the Son of God.”*

The Transfiguration on the Mountain

Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain and his “transfigured” before them. Moses & Elijah appear as well. Peter offers to build tents for them. A cloud overshadows them and identifies Jesus as God’s “Son” and commands them to listen to him.



Why do Moses & Elijah Appear with Jesus?



Both experience theophanies (appearances of God) but neither is able to see God's face.

→ On the mountain of Transfiguration, Moses & Elijah are finally allowed to see what they could not see during their earthly lives: the unveiled face of God

Jesus Claims to be
God

Facts about the Resurrection of Jesus

Fact 1: After his crucifixion, Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in his personal tomb. #death of Jesus by crucifixion

Fact 2: On the Sunday following the crucifixion, the tomb of Jesus was found empty by a group of his women followers. #the empty tomb

Fact 3: On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead. #post-resurrection appearances

Fact 4: The original disciples believed that Jesus was risen from the dead despite their having every reason not to. #the origin of the Christian Faith

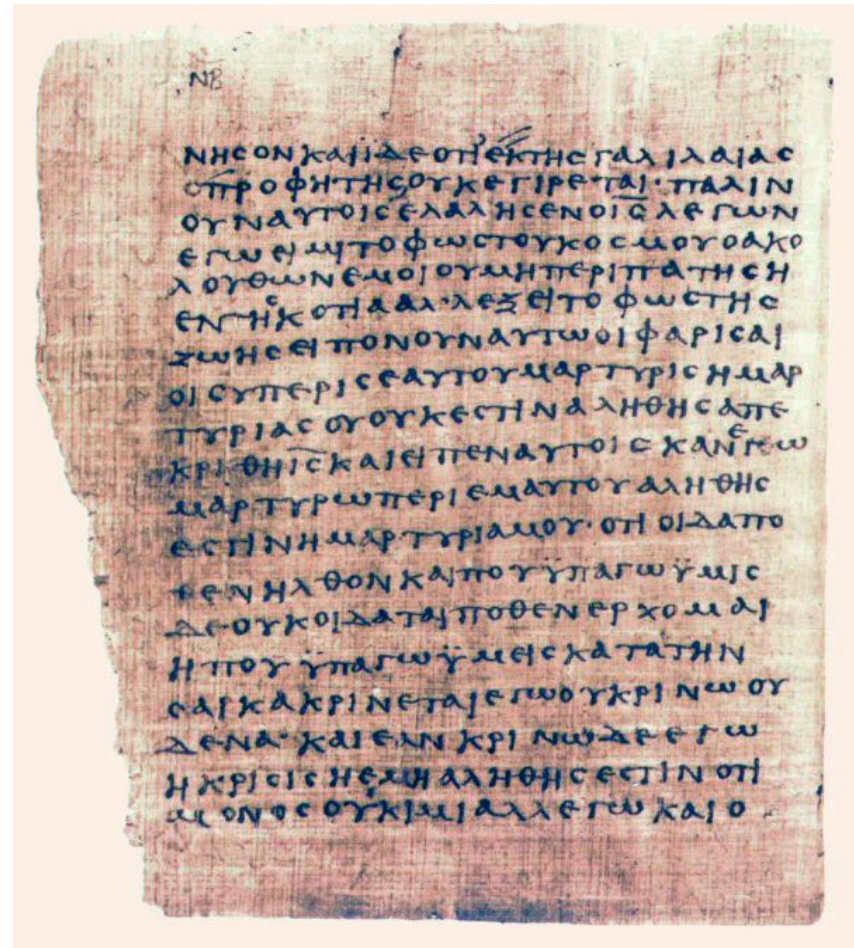
1	Jesus died	Jesus rose	Christianity
2	Jesus died	Jesus didn't rise—apostles deceived	Hallucination
3	Jesus died	Jesus didn't rise—apostles myth-makers	Myth
4	Jesus died	Jesus didn't rise—apostles deceivers	Conspiracy
5	Jesus didn't die		Swoon

Are the Gospels Reliable?

Why does the
Christian faith spend
so much energy on
defending the
historical reliability of
the Gospels?



Papyrus 66 - Gospel of John - early 2nd century



Manuscripts were hand-copied

Theory of the Anonymous Gospels

1. All four Gospels were originally published w/o any titles or headings identifying the authors
 2. All four Gospels were circulated w/o any titles for almost a century before anyone attributed them to M, M, L, & J
- **A.** No anonymous copies of M, M, L, or J have ever been found. Ancient manuscripts are unanimous in attribution.
 - **A.** Utterly implausible that a book circulating around the Roman Empire w/o a title for almost 100 yrs could somehow at some point be attributed to exactly the same author by scribes throughout the world and yet leave no trace of disagreement in any manuscripts. x4

Theory of the Anonymous Gospels

- 3. It was only much later that the titles were finally added to the manuscripts
 - 4. None of the Gospels were written by an eyewitness
- **A1.** There would be a diversity of titles.
 - **A2.** The moment there was more than one Gospel used in Mass, they'd need titles.
 - **A.** If titles were added later to give the Gospels "much needed authority," then why are two of the four Gospels attributed to *non-eyewitnesses*? Why pick Mark and Luke, who never even knew Jesus?

THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE: NO ANONYMOUS GOSPELS

<i>Gospel Title</i>	<i>Earliest Greek Manuscript</i>	<i>Date¹³</i>
Gospel according to Matthew	Papyrus 4	2nd century
Gospel according to Matthew	Papyrus 62	2nd century
According to Matthew	Codex Sinaiticus	4th century
According to Matthew	Codex Vaticanus	4th century
[Go]spel according to Mat[th]e[w]	Codex Washingtonianus	4th–5th century
Gospel according to Matthew	Codex Alexandrinus	5th century
Gospel according to Matthew	Codex Ephraemi	5th century
Gospel according to Matthew [End]	Codex Bezae	5th century
According to Mark	Codex Sinaiticus	4th century
According to Mark	Codex Vaticanus	4th century
Gospel according to Mark	Codex Washingtonianus	4th–5th century
[Gosp]el according to Mark	Codex Alexandrinus	5th century
Gospel according to Mar[k] [End]	Codex Ephraemi	5th century
Gospel according to Mark	Codex Bezae	5th century
Gospel according to Luke	Papyrus 75	2nd–3rd century
According to Luke	Codex Sinaiticus	4th century
According to Luke	Codex Vaticanus	4th century
Gospel according to Luke	Codex Washingtonianus	4th–5th century
Gospel according to Luke	Codex Alexandrinus	5th century
Gospel according to Luke	Codex Bezae	5th century

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS:
ACTUAL ANONYMOUS MANUSCRIPTS

<i>Title/Subscript</i>	<i>Greek Manuscript</i>	<i>Date</i> ²³
To the Hebrews	Papyrus 64	2nd century
To the Hebrews	Codex Sinaiticus	4th century
To the Hebrews	Codex Vaticanus	4th century
To the Hebrews, written from Rome	Codex Alexandrinus	5th century
To the Hebrews, written from Italy	Codex Porphyrianus	9th century
To the Hebrews, written from Italy <i>by Timothy</i>	Minuscule 1739	10th century
To the Hebrews, written from Rome <i>by Paul</i> to those in Jerusalem	Minuscule 81	11th century
To the Hebrews, written in Hebrew from Italy <i>anonymously</i> <i>by Timothy</i>	Minuscule 104	11th century

The Gospels are Ancient Biographies (Greek: *bios*)

1. Ancient biographies focus on the life and death of a single individual.
 - 3 main parts: birth, public life, and death of the person.
2. Ancient biographies often average between 10,000 and 20,000 words in length.
 - M=18,000; Mk.= 11,000; Lk.= 19,000; Jn= 15,000
3. Ancient biographies often begin with ancestry.
 - “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David . . .”
4. Ancient biographies don’t have to be in chronological order.
 - Can be arranged topically or thematically
5. Ancient biographies don’t tell you everything about a person.

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write carefully in order for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the facts concerning the things of which you have been informed.” (Lk. 1:1-4)

Dating the Gospels

Liberal Scholarship

Mark AD 70-75

Matthew & Luke AD 80-85

John AD 90-100

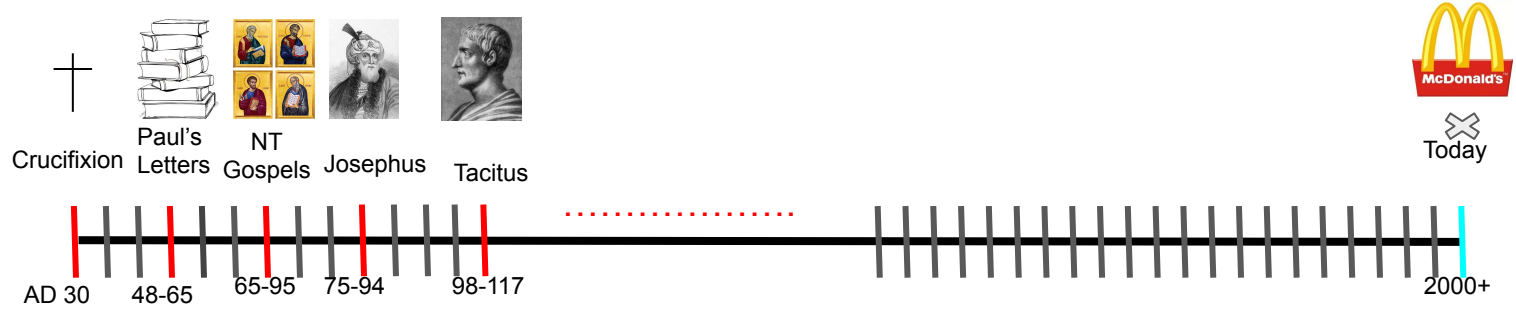
Conservative Scholarship

Mark AD 50-60

Matthew & Luke AD 60-65

John AD 65-68

The Crucial Time-Gap



Jesus Started a Church

- “I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18)
 - “Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 18:18)
 - “He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me” (Lk. 10:16)
 - “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (Jn. 20:23)
-

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

**Jesus deputized his 12
disciples to govern, teach,
and sanctify in his name**

Christus Totus

Jesus Plus the Church: The “Total Christ” (Christus Totus)

795 **Christ and his Church thus together make up the “whole Christ”** (Christus totus). The Church is one with Christ. The saints are acutely aware of this unity:

Let us rejoice then and give thanks that we have become not only Christians, but Christ himself. Do you understand and grasp, brethren, God’s grace toward us? Marvel and rejoice: we have become Christ. For if he is the head, we are the members; he and we together are the whole man. . . . **The fullness of Christ then is the head and the members. But what does “head and members” mean? Christ and the Church.** (St. Augustine, In Jo. ev. 21,8:PL 35,1568.)

Our redeemer has shown himself to be one person with the holy Church whom he has taken to himself. (Pope St. Gregory the Great, Moralia in Job, præf.,14:PL 75,525A.)

Head and members form as it were one and the same mystical person. (St. Thomas Aquinas, STh III,48,2.)

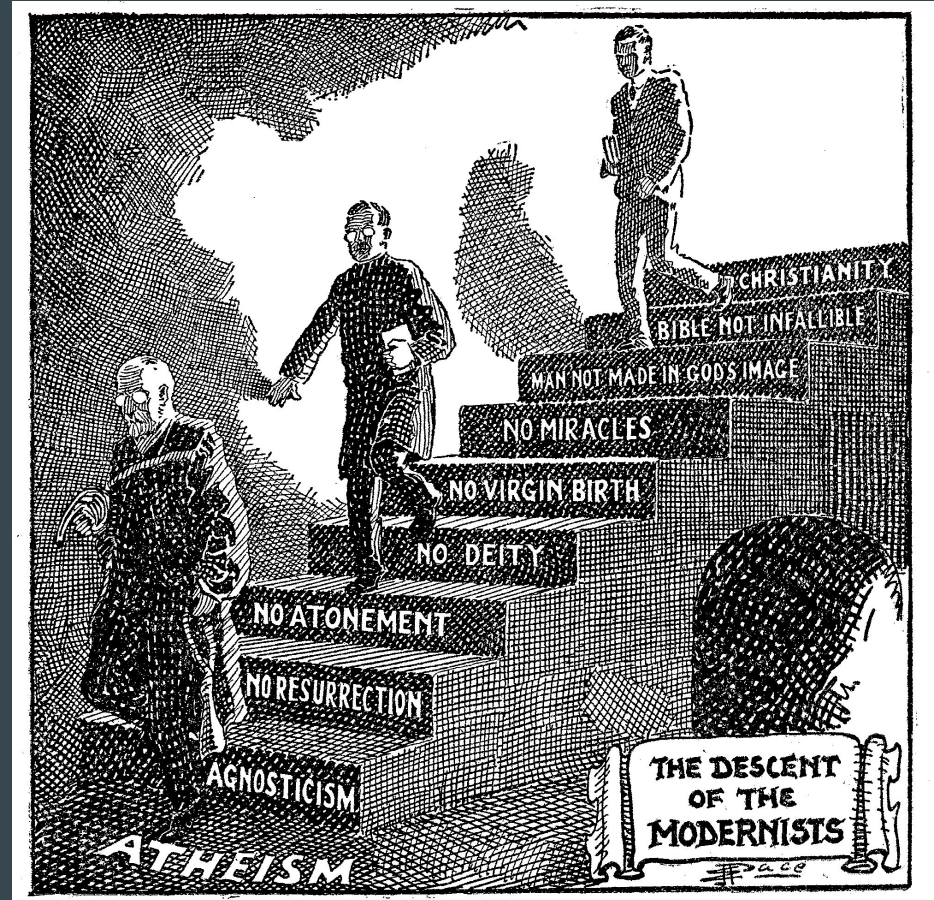
A reply of St. Joan of Arc to her judges sums up the faith of the holy doctors and the good sense of the believer: “About Jesus Christ and the Church, I simply know they’re just one thing, and we shouldn’t complicate the matter.” (Acts of the Trial of Joan of Arc)

The Five Solas of the Reformation

1. Sola scriptura ("by Scripture alone")
 - Scripture is to be understood as the sole source of divine revelation, the only inspired, infallible, final, and authoritative norm of faith and practice.
2. Sola fide ("by faith alone")
 - The sole instrument of justification is faith, and that even this faith is a gift of God. It is by grace.
3. Sola gratia ("by grace alone")
 - If man is to be saved, he will not be able to cooperate with God. His salvation will be an act of pure grace, and grace alone, on the part of God
4. Solus Christus or Solo Christo ("Christ alone" or "through Christ alone")
 - Christ alone, and not the church, is our only Mediator
5. Soli Deo gloria ("glory to God alone")
 - The whole of salvation is for God's glory

Jesus & the Fundamentalists

- Creation (Faith vs. Science)
- Adam & Eve
- Noah's Flood
- Prophecy & the End Times



Why it is dangerous to make evangelism another form of marketing.

by Tyler Wigg-Stevenson

Illustrations
by Polly Becker

JESUS IS NOT A BRAND

Few moments after I first moved to Nashville, a billboard by the roadside I'd advertised as devoted to Christian recovery programs. But what caught my eye was the billboard's photograph, the subject, brother, some delicious-looking pint of beer that has just been poured. I never waited a hour more than I did when I drove past that billboard. And I am not an alcoholic. I wonder how many of the hundreds of people walking from within this ground that spend every day and every personally engaged—not to mention subtle, but to pull off at the very best for a full, solid one.

COVER STORY

AN UNRESOLVED DILEMMA

This is the issue we confront when weighing the merits of the church's public outreach, from evangelism, to a Western culture saturated by marketing. By marketing I refer to all the activities that help organizations identify and shape the wants of target consumers and then try to satisfy those consumers better than competitors do. This usually involves doing market research, analyzing consumer trends, and then making strategic decisions about product design, branding, pricing, promotion, advertising, and distribution.

While researching *Brand Christianity*, I realized that the church faced considerable questions as it sought to maximize a public witness and evangelistic risk in a consumer culture. One is this: Should we market the church and the church's message? In this article, I explore that one evangelistic message to share: knowing Christ and being transformed

