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## On The Historicity Of Jesus Richard Richard Carrier

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### HODGES HUERTA

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[The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus](#) On the Historicity of Jesus Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt The assumption that Jesus existed as a historical person has occasionally been questioned in the course of the last hundred years or so, but any doubts that have been raised have usually been put to rest in favor of imagining a blend of the historical, the mythical and the theological in the surviving records of Jesus. Carrier re-examines the whole question and finds compelling reasons to suspect the more daring assumption is correct. He lays out extensive research on the evidence for Jesus and the origins of Christianity and poses the key questions that must now be answered if the historicity of Jesus is to survive as a dominant paradigm. Carrier contrasts the most credible reconstruction of a historical Jesus with the most credible theory of Christian origins if a historical Jesus did not exist. Such a theory would posit that the Jesus figure was originally conceived of as a celestial being known only through private revelations and hidden messages in scripture; then

stories placing this being in earth history were crafted to communicate the claims of the gospel allegorically; such stories eventually came to be believed or promoted in the struggle for control of the Christian churches that survived the tribulations of the first century. Carrier finds the latter theory more credible than has been previously imagined. He explains why it offers a better explanation for all the disparate evidence surviving from the first two centuries of the Christian era. He argues that we need a more careful and robust theory of cultural syncretism between Jewish theology and politics of the second-temple period and the most popular features of pagan religion and philosophy of the time. For anyone intent on defending a historical Jesus, this is the book to challenge. On the Historicity of Jesus Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt The assumption that Jesus existed as a historical person has occasionally been questioned in the course of the last hundred years or so, but any doubts that have been raised have usually been put to rest in favor of imagining a blend of the historical, the mythical and the theological in the surviving records of Jesus. Carrier re-examines the whole question and finds compelling reasons to suspect the more daring assumption is correct. He lays out extensive research on the evidence for Jesus and the

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## Discourse

The earliest Christians believed Jesus was an ancient celestial being who put on a bodysuit of flesh, died at the hands of dark forces, and then rose from the dead and ascended back into the heavens. But the writing we have today from that first generation of Christians never says where they thought he landed, where he lived, or where he died. The idea that Jesus toured Galilee and visited Jerusalem arose only a lifetime later, in unsourced legends written in a foreign land and language. Many sources repeat those legends, but none corroborate them. Why? What exactly was the original belief about Jesus, and how did this belief change over time? In *Jesus from Outer Space*, noted philosopher and historian Richard Carrier summarizes for a popular audience the scholarly research on these and related questions, revealing in turn how modern attempts to conceal, misrepresent, or avoid the actual evidence calls into question the entire field of Jesus studies--and present-day beliefs about how Christianity began.

*A Defense of Metaphysical Naturalism* BRILL

A new presentation of the argument that no historical Jesus existed. A full and comprehensive survey of the question through an examination of the early Christian record, canonical and non-canonical, from Q to the Gospels, from the earliest Pauline epistles to the second century apologists, along with Jewish, Gnostic, and Greco-Roman documents of the time. The philosophy of the era, its religious expression in the pagan mystery cults, fascinating glimpses into the historical background of the period, an in-depth consideration of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, are only some of the additional topics covered in the book. A richly-detailed, highly lucid and entertaining account of how Christianity began without an historical Jesus of Nazareth, who came to life only on the pages of the Gospels. While based on the author's work for 'The Jesus Puzzle' website, the book is almost entirely an original writing, not a compilation of website articles. Like the website itself, the book has been styled for the general reader, though the scholarly community will find it of value as well.

*Bayes's Theorem and the Quest for the Historical Jesus* Christian Publishing House

The Christ myth theory (also known as the Jesus myth theory, Jesus mythicism or simply mythicism) is the hypothesis that Jesus of Nazareth never existed. It does appear that most scholars of antiquity agree that there was an individual named Jesus of the period. What also becomes apparent is that much of the philosophy, dogma and supernatural teachings of Christianity can be traced to much earlier religions and that the Jews of the time adopted these pre-Christian cultural and religious myths as their own. They subsequently evolved into legend as often happens. The Christ myth theory takes a very adversarial approach and contradicts the mainstream view in historical Jesus research, which accepts that there are events described in the gospels that are not historical but which still assumes that the gospels are founded on a basic historical core. Many proponents of the theory use a three-fold argument first developed in the 19th century: that the New Testament has no historical value that there are no non-Christian references to Jesus Christ dating back to the first century that Christianity had pagan or mythical roots. Despite this there remains a strong consensus in historical-critical biblical scholarship that a historical Jesus did live in that area and in that time period. However, scholars differ on the historicity of specific episodes described in the Biblical accounts of Jesus, and the only two events subject to "almost universal agreement" are that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and was crucified by the order of the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate. Some scholars have made the case that there are a number of plausible "Jesuses" that could have existed, that there can be no certainty as to which Jesus was the historical Jesus. Christ's given name, commonly Romanized as Yeshua, was quite common in first-century Galilee. (Jesus comes from the transliteration of Yeshua into Greek and then English.) Archaeologists have unearthed the tombs of 71 Yeshuas from the period of Jesus' death. Many of the allegories, events and proclaimed miracles attributed to Jesus were ever-present throughout history and not at all unique to Jesus of Nazareth. Some of the arguments attributed to many scholars are that: 1.The gospels were written many decades or even a century after Jesus' estimated year of death, by individuals who likely never met Jesus, and then were edited or forged over the centuries by unknown scribes with their own agendas. 2.There are no surviving historic records about Jesus of Nazareth from any non-Jewish author until the second century and Jesus left no writings or other archaeological evidence. 3.Certain gospel stories are similar to those of dying-and-rising gods, demigods (sons of gods), solar deities, saviors or other divine men such as Horus, Mithra/Mithras, Prometheus, Dionysus, Osiris, Buddha and Krishna, as well as Christ-like historical figures like Apollonius of Tyana and numerous others. In the days where people kill for their beliefs, it should be a high priority to better understand our humanity

and commonality rather than accept religions which divide and take the stand that 'my belief is the one and only true belief'."

*An Evaluation of Ehrman's Did Jesus Exist?* Harper Collins

In this fully revised and updated second edition of his accessible account of systematic Christology, Gerald O'Collins continues to challenge the contemporary publishing trend for sensationalist books on Jesus that are supported neither by the New Testament witness nor by mainline Christian beliefs. This book critically examines the best biblical and historical scholarship before tackling head-on some of the key questions of systematic Christology: does orthodox faith present Jesus the man as deficient and depersonalized? Is his sinlessness compatible with the exercise of a free human will? Does up-to-date exegesis challenge his virginal conception and personal resurrection? Can one reconcile Jesus' role as universal Saviour with the truth and values to be found in other religions? What should the feminist movement highlight in presenting Jesus? This integral Christology is built around the resurrection of the crucified Jesus, highlights love as the key to redemption, and proposes a synthesis of the divine presence through Jesus. Clear, balanced, and accessible, this book should be valued by any student reading systematic theology, anyone training for the ministry in all denominations, as well as interested general readers.

*Jesus of Nazareth* Dundurn.com

This volume explains the inadequacy of the sources and methods used to establish Jesus' historicity, and how agnosticism can reasonably be upgraded to theorising about ahistoricity when reconsidering Christian origins.

*Bart Ehrman and the Quest of the Historical Jesus of Nazareth* Forgotten Books

Why did Christianity begin, and why did it take the shape it did? To answer this question -- which any historian must face -- renowned New Testament scholar N. T. Wright focuses on the key points: what precisely happened at Easter? What did the early Christians mean when they said that Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead? What can be said today about this belief? This book, third in Wright's series *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, sketches a map of ancient beliefs about life after death, in both the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds. It then highlights the fact that the early Christians' belief about the afterlife belonged firmly on the Jewish spectrum, while introducing several new mutations and sharper definitions. This, together with other features of early Christianity, forces the historian to read the Easter narratives in the gospels, not simply as late rationalizations of early Christian spirituality, but as accounts of two actual events: the empty tomb of Jesus and his "appearances." How do we explain these phenomena? The early Christians' answer was that Jesus had indeed been bodily raised from the dead; that was why they hailed him as the messianic "son of God." No modern historian has come up with a more convincing explanation. Facing this question, we are confronted to this day with the most central issues of the Christian worldview and theology.

*Why Faith Fails* Canongate U.S.

The assumption that Jesus existed as a historical person has occasionally been questioned in the course of the last hundred years or so, but any doubts that have been raised have usually been put to rest in favor of imagining a blend of the historical, the mythical and the theological in the surviving records of Jesus. Carrier re-examines the whole question and finds compelling reasons to suspect the more daring assumption is correct. He lays out extensive research on the evidence for Jesus and the origins of Christianity and poses the key questions that must now be answered if the historicity of Jesus is to survive as a dominant paradigm. Carrier contrasts the most credible reconstruction of a historical Jesus with the most credible theory of Christian origins if a historical Jesus did not exist. Such a theory would posit that the Jesus figure was originally conceived of as a celestial being known only through private revelations and hidden messages in scripture; then stories placing this being in earth history were crafted to communicate the claims of the gospel allegorically; such stories eventually came to be believed or promoted in the struggle for control of the Christian churches that survived the tribulations of the first century. Carrier finds the latter theory more credible than has been previously imagined. He explains why it offers a better explanation for all the disparate evidence surviving from the first two centuries of the Christian era. He argues that we need a more careful and robust theory of cultural syncretism between Jewish theology and politics of the second-temple period and the most popular features of pagan religion and philosophy of the time. For anyone intent on defending a historical Jesus, this is the book to challenge.

*The Jesus Puzzle* Canongate U.S.

The earliest of the four Gospels, the book portrays Jesus as an enigmatic figure, struggling with

enemies, his inner and external demons, and with his devoted but disconcerted disciples. Unlike other gospels, his parables are obscure, to be explained secretly to his followers. With an introduction by Nick Cave

*The Historicity of Jesus* OUP Oxford

In the past forty years, while historical-critical studies were seeking with renewed intensity to reconstruct events behind the biblical texts, not least the life of Jesus, two branches of literary studies were finally reaching maturity. First, researchers were recognizing that many biblical texts are rewritings or transformations of older texts that still exist, thus giving a clearer sense of where the biblical texts came from; and second, studies in the ancient art of composition clarified the biblical texts' unity and purpose, that is to say, where biblical texts were headed. The work of tracing literary indebtedness and art is far from finished but it is already possible and necessary to draw a conclusion: it is that, bluntly, Jesus did not exist as a historical individual. This is not as negative as may at first appear. In a deeply personal coda, Brodie begins to develop a new vision of Jesus as an icon of God's presence in the world and in human history.

*Questioning the Historicity of Jesus* AuthorHouse

The introduction to this new guide sets out the sources (Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian), noting the problems connected with them, paying particular attention to the nature of the gospels, and the Synoptic versus the Johannine tradition. A substantial section will discuss scholarship on Jesus from the nineteenth century to the explosion of works in the present day, introducing and explaining the three different 'quests' for the historical Jesus. Subsequent chapters will analyse key themes in historical Jesus research: Jesus' Galilean origins; the scope of his ministry and models of 'holy men', particularly that of prophet; Jesus' teaching and healing; his trial and crucifixion; the highly contentious question of his resurrection; and finally an exploration of the links between the Jesus movement and the early church. Throughout, the (often opposing) positions of a variety of key scholars will be explained and discussed (eg. Sanders, Crossan, Dunn, Wright, Brown).

*Did Jesus Exist?* Brill / Rodopi

The publication of the King James version of the Bible, translated between 1603 and 1611, coincided with an extraordinary flowering of English literature and is universally acknowledged as the greatest influence on English-language literature in history. Now, world-class literary writers introduce the book of the King James Bible in a series of beautifully designed, small-format volumes. The introducers' passionate, provocative, and personal engagements with the spirituality and the language of the text make the Bible come alive as a stunning work of literature and remind us of its overwhelming contemporary relevance.

*The Historical Jesus* Prometheus Books

This in-depth discussion of New Testament scholarship and the challenges of history as a whole proposes Bayes's Theorem, which deals with probabilities under conditions of uncertainty, as a solution to the problem of establishing reliable historical criteria. The author demonstrates that valid historical methods—not only in the study of Christian origins but in any historical study—can be described by, and reduced to, the logic of Bayes's Theorem. Conversely, he argues that any method that cannot be reduced to this theorem is invalid and should be abandoned. Writing with thoroughness and clarity, the author explains Bayes's Theorem in terms that are easily understandable to professional historians and laypeople alike, employing nothing more than well-known primary school math. He then explores precisely how the theorem can be applied to history and addresses numerous challenges to and criticisms of its use in testing or justifying the conclusions that historians make about the important persons and events of the past. The traditional and established methods of historians are analyzed using the theorem, as well as all the major "historicity criteria" employed in the latest quest to establish the historicity of Jesus. The author demonstrates not only the deficiencies of these approaches but also ways to rehabilitate them using Bayes's Theorem. Anyone with an interest in historical methods, how historical knowledge can be justified, new applications of Bayes's Theorem, or the study of the historical Jesus will find this book to be essential reading.

*What the Earliest Christians Really Believed about Christ* College Press

After more than 52 weeks on the Toronto Star's bestseller list and 43 weeks on The Globe and Mail's bestseller list, Tom Harpur's groundbreaking book, *The Pagan Christ*, is now available in paperback. This new edition includes the twenty-page discussion guide, with more than 100 questions, to help facilitate a deeper, chapter-by-chapter analysis and more profound understanding of the findings and arguments found in the book. Subjects for discussion include: the ancient Egyptian roots of Christianity, the real meaning of the Bible, the key to whether Jesus

really existed, the re-mythologizing of Christianity, the meaning of the Christ within all of us and the need to understand myth and allegory. With a new introduction by Tom Harpur, this paperback edition sheds further light on what has become one of the most talked about books of the new millennium.

#### **Proving History** Prometheus Books

Written by an L. A. County homicide detective and former atheist, *Cold-Case Christianity* examines the claims of the New Testament using the skills and strategies of a hard-to-convince criminal investigator. Christianity could be defined as a “cold case”: it makes a claim about an event from the distant past for which there is little forensic evidence. In *Cold-Case Christianity*, J. Warner Wallace uses his nationally recognized skills as a homicide detective to look at the evidence and eyewitnesses behind Christian beliefs. Including gripping stories from his career and the visual techniques he developed in the courtroom, Wallace uses illustration to examine the powerful evidence that validates the claims of Christianity. A unique apologetic that speaks to readers’ intense interest in detective stories, *Cold-Case Christianity* inspires readers to have confidence in Christ as it prepares them to articulate the case for Christianity.

*Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt* Sheffield Phoenix Press Limited

The main purpose of the present volume is to set forth the evidence for believing in the historical reality of Jesus’ existence upon earth. By way of approach, the characteristic features of more recent opinion regarding the historical Jesus have been surveyed, and, on the other hand, the views of those who deny his existence have been examined in detail. The negative arguments have been carefully analyzed in order accurately to comprehend the problem. - Preface.

#### **EVIDENCE FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS** Image

Brief Description of the HISTORICITY OF JESUS Written by a former agnostic, the book has solid facts and evidences on the historicity of Jesus, as real historical person; and the reliability of the New Testament through the following: 1. Non-Christian Writers, 2. Early Jewish Writers, 3. New Testament Writers. 4. Archaeology Verification, 5. Historical Facts of Jesus’ Claims, Deeds and Miracles He Performed, 6. Manuscript Attestation 7. Resurrection of Christ and Its Implications 8. 12 Resurrection Appearances of Jesus. In this Revised 2020 Edition are GOSPEL: POWER OF GOD TO SALVATION and featured articles and columns like JOY OF SALVATION: Benefits Now and After Death, Trusting God When It Doesn’t Make Sense, How to Share the Gospel to Families and the Community, Obeying the Gospel During COVID-19 Lockdown, Prayers for Strength and Victory of Manny Pacquiao.

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#### **The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth** Prometheus Books

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • “A lucid, intelligent page-turner” (Los Angeles Times) that challenges long-held assumptions about Jesus, from the host of Believer Two thousand years ago, an itinerant Jewish preacher walked across the Galilee, gathering followers to establish what he called the “Kingdom of God.” The revolutionary movement he launched was so threatening to the established order that he was executed as a state criminal. Within decades after his death, his followers would call him God. Sifting through centuries of mythmaking, Reza Aslan sheds new light on one of history’s most enigmatic figures by examining Jesus through the lens of the tumultuous era in which he lived. Balancing the Jesus of the Gospels against the historical sources, Aslan describes a man full of conviction and passion, yet rife with contradiction. He explores the reasons the early Christian church preferred to promulgate an image of Jesus as a peaceful spiritual teacher rather than a politically conscious revolutionary. And he grapples with the riddle of how Jesus understood himself, the mystery that is at the heart of all subsequent claims about his divinity. Zealot yields a fresh perspective on one of the greatest stories ever told even as it affirms the radical and transformative nature of Jesus’ life and mission. Praise for Zealot “Riveting . . . Aslan synthesizes Scripture and scholarship to create an original account.”—The New Yorker “Fascinatingly and convincingly drawn . . . Aslan may come as close as one can to respecting those who revere Jesus as the peace-loving, turn-the-other-cheek, true son of God depicted in modern Christianity, even as he knocks down that image.”—The Seattle Times “[Aslan’s] literary talent is as essential to the effect of Zealot as are his scholarly and journalistic chops. . . . A vivid, persuasive portrait.”—Salon “This tough-minded, deeply political book does full justice to the real Jesus, and honors him in the process.”—San Francisco Chronicle “A special and revealing work, one that believer and skeptic alike will find surprising, engaging, and original.”—Jon Meacham, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power* “Compulsively readable . . . This superb work is highly recommended.”—Publishers Weekly (starred review)

#### **Is Jesus History?** Routledge

In this anthology of recent criticisms aimed at the reasonableness of Christian belief, a former evangelical minister and apologist, author of the critically acclaimed *Why I Became an Atheist*, has assembled fifteen outstanding articles by leading skeptics, expanding on themes introduced in his first book. Central is a defense of his “outsider test of faith,” arguing that believers should test their faith with the same skeptical standards they use to evaluate the other faiths they reject, as if

they were outsiders. Experts in medicine, psychology, and anthropology join Loftus to show why, when this test is applied to Christianity, it becomes very difficult to rationally defend. Collectively, these articles reveal that popular Christian beliefs tend to rely on ignorance of the facts. Drawing together experts in diverse fields, including Hector Avalos, Richard Carrier, David Eller, and Robert Price, this book deals a powerful blow against Christian faith.

#### **Christology** Baker Academic

The publication of the King James version of the Bible, translated between 1603 and 1611, coincided with an extraordinary flowering of English literature and is universally acknowledged as the greatest influence on English-language literature in history. Now, world-class literary writers introduce the book of the King James Bible in a series of beautifully designed, small-format volumes. The introducers’ passionate, provocative, and personal engagements with the spirituality and the language of the text make the Bible come alive as a stunning work of literature and remind us of its overwhelming contemporary relevance.

#### *A New Historiographical Approach* Pitchstone Publishing (US&CA)

“This book will prove to be a most effective weapon... against the debunking and skeptical attitudes toward the Gospels that are so prevalent, not only in academe, but also on the street, among young people who, sadly, are leaving the Churches in droves.” – Robert Barron, author of *Catholicism For well over a hundred years now, many scholars have questioned the historical truth of the Gospels, claiming that they were originally anonymous. Others have even argued that Jesus of Nazareth did not think he was God and never claimed to be divine. In The Case for Jesus, Dr. Brant Pitre, the bestselling author of Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist, goes back to the sources—the biblical and historical evidence for Christ—in order to answer several key questions, including:*

- Were the four Gospels really anonymous?
- Are the Gospels folklore? Or are they biographies?
- Were the four Gospels written too late to be reliable?
- What about the so-called “Lost Gospels,” such as “Q” and the Gospel of Thomas?
- Did Jesus claim to be God?
- Is Jesus divine in all four Gospels? Or only in John?
- Did Jesus fulfill the Jewish prophecies of the Messiah?
- Why was Jesus crucified?
- What is the evidence for the Resurrection?

As *The Case for Jesus* will show, recent discoveries in New Testament scholarship, as well as neglected evidence from ancient manuscripts and the early church fathers, together have the potential to pull the rug out from under a century of skepticism toward the traditional Gospels. Above all, Pitre shows how the divine claims of Jesus of Nazareth can only be understood by putting them in their ancient Jewish context.