

On The Historicity Of Jesus Richard Richard Carrier

Growing interest in the historical Jesus can be frustrated by diverse and conflicting claims about what he said and did. This series brings together in accessible form the conclusions of an international team of distinguished scholars regarding various important aspects of Jesus' teaching. All of the authors have extensively analyzed the biblical and contextual evidence about whom Jesus was and what he taught, and they summarize their findings here in easily readable and stimulating discussions. Historian John Dickson examines what can be trusted as reliable history in order to answer the question: is Jesus fact or fiction? More importantly, he asks: if Jesus really did exist and was who he claimed to be, what does that mean for you today? Great to give away to people interested in the evidence for Christianity.

The Testimonium Flavianum, a brief passage in Jewish Antiquities by Flavius Josephus (37 - ca. 100 AD), is widely considered the only extant evidence besides the Bible of the historicity of Jesus Christ. In the sixteenth century the authenticity of this passage was challenged by scholars, launching a controversy that has still not been resolved. Josephus on Jesus: The Testimonium Flavianum Controversy from Late Antiquity to Modern Times is a history of this

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Richard Richard Carrier

passage and the long-standing debate over its authenticity. Because it may be the most quoted ancient text next to the Bible, this book not only illuminates the history of the Testimonium Flavianum through the ages, but also the general development of historical criticism in the Western World.

Richard Carrier, Ph.D., philosopher, historian, blogger, has published a number of papers in the field of ancient history and biblical studies. He has also written several books and chapters on diverse subjects, and has been blogging and speaking since 2006. He is known the world over for all the above. But here, together for the first time, are all of Dr. Carrier's peer reviewed academic journal articles in history through the year 2013, collected with his best magazine articles, research papers and blog posts on the same subjects. Many have been uniquely revised for this publication. Others are inaccessible except through libraries or paywalls. Twenty chapters include his seminal papers on the scandal of Hitler's Table Talk, the Jerry Vardaman microletter farce, and the testimonies to Christ in Josephus, Tacitus, and Thallus, as well as Carrier's journalistic foray into ancient pyramid quackery, his work on the historical & textual errancy of the bible, and more. 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.

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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.

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.

In *Did Jesus Exist?* historian and Bible expert Bart Ehrman confronts the question, "Did Jesus exist at all?" Ehrman vigorously defends the historical Jesus, identifies the most historically reliable sources for best understanding Jesus' mission and message, and offers a compelling portrait of the person at the heart of the Christian tradition. Known as a master

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explainer with deep knowledge of the field, Bart Ehrman methodically demolishes both the scholarly and popular “mythicist” arguments against the existence of Jesus. Marshaling evidence from within the Bible and the wider historical record of the ancient world, Ehrman tackles the key issues that surround the mythologies associated with Jesus and the early Christian movement. In *Did Jesus Exist?: The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth*, Ehrman establishes the criterion for any genuine historical investigation and provides a robust defense of the methods required to discover the Jesus of history.

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

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Richard Richard Carrier

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.

The Resurrection of Jesus is at the very root of Christian faith; without belief in Jesus Christianity dies. In this thought-provoking work, Matthew Levering defends the credibility of the claim that Jesus rose from the dead. Drawing on the work of N. T. Wright, Levering shows that the historical evidence vindicates this assumption, and reveals that the Gospels were backed by eyewitnesses who were living and telling their stories even during the time of the writing of the Gospels. The author also emphasises the importance of evaluating the Old Testament to validate Jesus' Resurrection. By highlighting the desire—both in the ancient world and now—to make the Resurrection more comprehensible by spiritualizing it, Levering argues that the fact that the disciples themselves did not do this provides a further clue to reliability. Finally, the author addresses the question of why Jesus does not continue to show himself in his glorified flesh after his resurrection, which is often seen as a strong case for scepticism. However, he shows that Jesus' entire mission is predicated upon helping us to avoid cleaving to the present world over God. He is leading us to where he is—the kingdom of God, the beginning of the new creation at the Father's right hand. By developing these arguments for the historical reality of Jesus' Resurrection, this ground-breaking study expertly draws together historical and theological reasons for believing that Jesus' Resurrection happened.

Rev. ed. of: Ancient evidence for the life of Jesus. Includes bibliographical references and index.

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Richard Richard Carrier

The search for the historical Jesus is a hot topic in both popular and academic circles today and has drawn a lot of attention from national magazines, such as Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report. Further, the media has given an undue amount of attention to the Jesus Seminar's outlandish statements, a self-selected liberal group representing a tiny percentage of New Testament scholarship. Dr. Gary Habermas will address the questions surrounding the debate over the historical Jesus and show a significant number of historical facts about Jesus in secular and non-New Testament sources that prove that the Jesus of history is the same Jesus of the Christian faith. The author of EVIDENCE FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS is Dr. Gary Habermas, author of the book, The Historical Jesus and about twenty other volumes. He received his Ph.D. from Michigan State University. Dr. Habermas is chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Liberty University. He has written more than 100 articles, mostly on the life of Jesus, which have appeared in scholarly journals and elsewhere. Herein you will learn why Jesus is one of the most historically verified lives of ancient times.

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.

In Jesus and the Chaos of History, James Crossley looks at the way the earliest traditions about Jesus interacted with a context of social upheaval and the ways in which this historical chaos of the early first century led to a range of ideas which were taken up, modified, ignored, and

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Richard Richard Carrier

reinterpreted in the movement that followed. Crossley examines how the earliest Palestinian tradition intersected with social upheaval and historical change and how accidental, purposeful, discontinuous, contradictory, and implicit meanings in the developments of ideas appeared in the movement that followed. He considers the ways seemingly egalitarian and countercultural ideas co-exist with ideas of dominance and power and how human reactions to socio-economic inequalities can end up mimicking dominant power. In this case, the book analyzes how a Galilean "protest" movement laid the foundations for its own brand of imperial rule. This evaluation is carried out in detailed studies on the kingdom of God and "Christology," "sinners" and purity, and gender and revolution.

Edited by Paul Copan and Ronald Tacelli, this is a lively and provocative debate between Christian philosopher William Lane Craig and New Testament scholar and atheist Gerd Lüdemann on the historical truth of the resurrection.

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

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Richard Richard Carrier

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

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Richard Richard Carrier

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'."

The following book offers a series of studies on the question of the historicity of Jesus, presented before the Independent Religious Society in Orchestra Hall. Contents: A Parable In Confidence Is Jesus a Myth? The Problem Stated The Christian Documents Virgin Births The Origin of the Cross The Silence of Profane Writers The Jesus Story a Religious Drama The Jesus of Paul Is Christianity Real? Is the World Indebted to Christianity? Christianity and Paganism Some Modern Opinions About Jesus. Another Rhetorical Jesus "We Owe Everything to Jesus" A Liberal Jew on Jesus From the Sunday Programs

Professor Wells argues that there was no historical Jesus, and in thus arguing he deals with the many recent writers who have interpreted the historical Jesus as some kind of political figure in the struggle against Rome, and calls in evidence the many contemporary theologians who agree with some of his arguments about early Christianity. The question at issue is what all the evidence adds up to. Does it establish that Jesus did or did not exist? Professor Wells concludes that the latter is the more likely hypothesis. This challenge to received thinking by both Christians and non-Christians is supported by much documentary evidence, and Professor Wells carefully examines all the relevant problems and answers all the relevant questions. He deliberately avoids polemic and speculation, and sticks so far as possible to the known facts and to rational inferences from the facts.

Presents evidence and information, aside from the Christian scriptures, on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Features excerpts in Roman correspondence and the early Christian writings known as the "New Testament Apocrypha."

File Type PDF On The Historicity Of Jesus

Richard Richard Carrier

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.

Excerpt from *The Historicity of Jesus: A Criticism of the Contention That Jesus Never Lived, a Statement of the Evidence for His Existence, an Estimate of His Relation to Christianity* The main purpose of the present volume is to set

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Richard Richard Carrier

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. In presenting the evidence for Jesus' historicity, an effort has been made both to meet opponents' objections and at the same time to give a fairly complete collection of the historical data upon which belief in his existence rests. Finally, the practical bearing of the discussion has been indicated by briefly considering Jesus' personal relation to the founding of the Christian movement and his significance for modern religion. The needs of two classes of readers have been kept in mind. The general public, it is believed, will find the treatment suited to their tastes. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works. Dr. Richard Carrier explains the four reasons he does not accept the Christian religion, describing four facts of the world that, had they been different, he would believe. He is brief, clear, and down to earth, covering the whole topic in easy-to-read explanation.--[book cover]

The introduction to this new guide sets out the sources

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Richard Richard Carrier

(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).

About the book: David Fitzgerald's award-winning 2010 book *Nailed: Ten Christian Myths That Show Jesus Never Existed At All* pointed out the top ten fatal flaws of Christianity's origin story. Now, *Jesus: Mything in Action* presents the most compelling new findings in Jesus Myth theory and critically examines its controversial reception by biblical scholars, the extent and reliability of our sources for Jesus, and reveals the surprising history behind Jesus' evolution. In this volume: *Mything in Action*, vol. I (chapters 1 - 12) looks at the myths of Jesus Mythicism: what it is and isn't; what biblical scholars are saying about it (and why); and examines our oldest "biographical" source for Jesus - the allegorical story we know as the Gospel of Mark.

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

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Richard Richard Carrier

Nick Cave

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.

From the internationally bestselling author of *No god but God* comes a fascinating, provocative and meticulously researched biography that challenges long-held assumptions about the man we know as Jesus of Nazareth. Two thousand years ago, an itinerant Jewish preacher from Galilee launched a revolutionary movement proclaiming the 'Kingdom

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Richard Richard Carrier

of God', and threatened the established order of first-century Palestine. Defying both Imperial Rome and its collaborators in the Jewish religious hierarchy, he was captured, tortured and executed as a state criminal. Within decades, his followers would call him the Son of God. Sifting through centuries of mythmaking, Reza Aslan sheds new light on one of history's most influential and enigmatic figures by examining Jesus within the context of the times in which he lived: the age of zealotry, an era awash in apocalyptic fervour, when scores of Jewish prophets and would-be messiahs wandered the Holy Land bearing messages from God. They also espoused a fervent nationalism that made resistance to Roman occupation a sacred duty. Balancing the Jesus of the Gospels against historical sources, Aslan describes a complex figure: a man of peace who exhorted his followers to arm themselves; an exorcist and faith healer who urged his disciples to keep his identity secret; and the seditious 'King of the Jews', whose promise of liberation from Rome went unfulfilled in his lifetime. Aslan explores why the early Church preferred to promulgate an image of Jesus as a peaceful spiritual teacher rather than a politically conscious revolutionary, and grapples with the riddle of how Jesus understood himself. Zealot provides a fresh perspective on one of the greatest stories ever told. The result is a thought-provoking, elegantly written biography with the pulse of a fast-paced novel, and a singularly brilliant portrait of a man, a time and the birth of a religion.

The historicity of Jesus is now widely accepted and hardly questioned by most scholars. But this assumption disarms biblical texts of much of their power by privileging an historical interpretation which effectively sweeps aside much theological speculation and allusion. Furthermore, the assumption of historicity gathers further assumptions to it, shaping the interpretation of texts, both denying and adding

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Richard Richard Carrier

subtext. Scholars are now faced with an endless array of works on the historical Jesus and few question what has been lost through this wide-spread assumption of historicity. *Is This Not the Carpenter?* presents a very valuable corrective: a literary rereading of the New Testament. If God does not exist, then what does? Is there good and evil, and should we care? How do we know what's true anyway? And can we make any sense of this universe, or our own lives? Sense and Goodness answers all these questions in lavish detail, without complex jargon. A complete worldview is presented and defended, covering every subject from knowledge to art, from metaphysics to morality, from theology to politics. Topics include free will, the nature of the universe, the meaning of life, and much more, arguing from scientific evidence that there is only a physical, natural world without gods or spirits, but that we can still live a life of love, meaning, and joy.

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. Comprehensively detailing the sources for our knowledge of

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Richard Richard Carrier

Jesus, Theissen and Merz fully explore the historical and social context of Jesus and his activity. They then unfold what we can know about Jesus' characteristics as a charismatic teacher, a Jewish prophet, a healer, a teller of parables and an ethical teacher. Finally, they examine closely the historical question surrounding Jesus' last supper, his violent death, the accounts of Easter, and the beginnings of Christology.

N.T. Wright takes us on a fascinating journey through ancient beliefs about life after death, from the shadowy figures who inhabit Homer's Hades, through Plato's hope for a blessed immortality, to the first century, where the Greek and Roman world (apart from the Jews) consistently denied any possibility of resurrection. We then examine ancient Jewish beliefs on the same subject, from the Bible to the Dead Sea Scrolls and beyond. This sets the scene for a full-scale examination of early Christian beliefs about resurrection in general and that of Jesus in particular, beginning with Paul and working through to the start of the third century. Wright looks at all the evidence, and asks: Why did the Christians agree with Jewish resurrection belief while introducing into it - across the board - significant modifications? To answer this question we come to the strange and evocative Easter stories in the gospels and asks whether they can have been late inventions. Wright seeks the best historical conclusions about the empty tomb and the belief that Jesus really did rise bodily from the dead, recognizing that it was this belief that caused early Christians to call Jesus 'Son of God'. In doing so, they posed a political challenge as well as a theological one. These challenges retain their power in the twenty-first century.

The first part of this collection is devoted to one of the key questions of the 'Synoptic Problem': the literary and christological relationship between Mark and Q. The second part deals with the 'Third Quest' for the historical Jesus, concentrating on his teaching and its cultural context. These

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Richard Richard Carrier

interrelated themes each attract detailed analysis of their methodology as well as their impact on New Testament studies generally, providing a very useful introduction to the state of research in these important fields.

The question of the historicity of Jesus' resurrection has been repeatedly probed, investigated and debated. And the results have varied widely. Perhaps some now regard this issue as the burned-over district of New Testament scholarship. Could there be any new and promising approach to this problem? Yes, answers Michael Licona. And he convincingly points us to a significant deficiency in approaching this question: our historiographical orientation and practice. So he opens this study with an extensive consideration of historiography and the particular problem of investigating claims of miracles. This alone is a valuable contribution. But then Licona carefully applies his principles and methods to the question of Jesus' resurrection. In addition to determining and working from the most reliable sources and bedrock historical evidence, Licona critically weighs other prominent hypotheses. His own argument is a challenging and closely argued case for the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus, the Christ. Any future approaches to dealing with this 'prize puzzle' of New Testament study will need to be routed through The Resurrection of Jesus.

Including a range of materials dating from the nineteenth century to the present, this comprehensive collection brings together the essential research into the historical reality of Jesus the man, his teachings, and the acts and events ascribed to him that comprise the foundational story of one of the world's central religions. br br The set features a substantial new introduction by the editor in the first volume and a full index in the last, and provides work covering all of the key aspects of the field, including the recent discussions concerning anti-Semitism in early Christianity, and the

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Richard Richard Carrier

political and ideological filtering of the Jesus story through the Roman empire and beyond.

On the Historicity of Jesus Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt

For a lay audience, and with help from historian Richard Carrier, religious studies scholar Raphael Lataster considers the best arguments for and against the existence of the so-called Historical Jesus; the Jesus of atheists. Parts 1 & 2 analyse the cases made by Bart Ehrman and Maurice Casey, who assert that Jesus definitely existed. Their arguments are found to be riddled with errors, and dependent on unreliable, and even non-existing, sources. Parts 3 & 4 discuss the more sceptical work of Lataster and Carrier, who conclude that Christianity probably began not with a humble carpenter, but with 'visions' of a heavenly Messiah. This exciting collaboration makes it very clear why the Historical Jesus might not have existed after all, and, to those willing to adopt a commonsensical probabilistic approach, Jesus Did Not Exist.

Why would anyone think Jesus never existed? Isn't it perfectly reasonable to accept that he was a real first century figure? As it turns out, no. NAILED sheds light on ten beloved Christian myths, and, with evidence gathered from historians across the theological spectrum, shows how they point to a Jesus Christ created solely through allegorical alchemy of hope and imagination; a messiah transformed from a purely literary, theological construct into the familiar figure of Jesus' in short, a purely mythic Christ.

When world-class biblical scholar Bart Ehrman first began to study the texts of the Bible in their original languages he was startled to discover the multitude of mistakes and intentional alterations that had been made by earlier translators. In Misquoting Jesus, Ehrman tells the story behind the mistakes and changes that ancient scribes made to the New

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Richard Richard Carrier

Testament and shows the great impact they had upon the Bible we use today. He frames his account with personal reflections on how his study of the Greek manuscripts made him abandon his once ultraconservative views of the Bible. Since the advent of the printing press and the accurate reproduction of texts, most people have assumed that when they read the New Testament they are reading an exact copy of Jesus's words or Saint Paul's writings. And yet, for almost fifteen hundred years these manuscripts were hand copied by scribes who were deeply influenced by the cultural, theological, and political disputes of their day. Both mistakes and intentional changes abound in the surviving manuscripts, making the original words difficult to reconstruct. For the first time, Ehrman reveals where and why these changes were made and how scholars go about reconstructing the original words of the New Testament as closely as possible. Ehrman makes the provocative case that many of our cherished biblical stories and widely held beliefs concerning the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity, and the divine origins of the Bible itself stem from both intentional and accidental alterations by scribes -- alterations that dramatically affected all subsequent versions of the Bible.

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