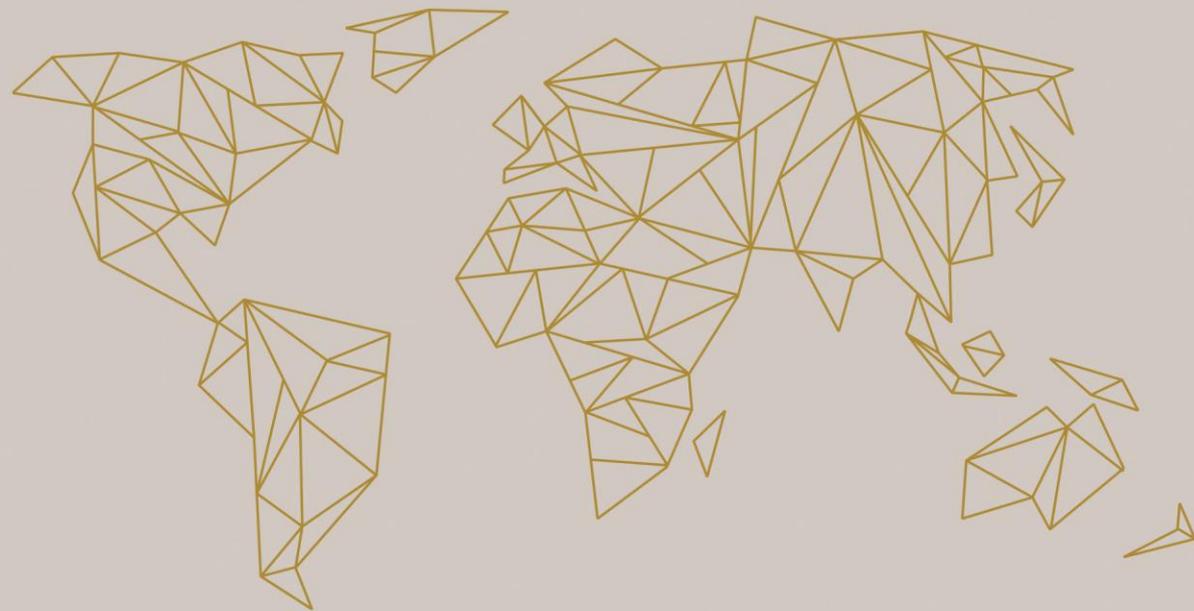


WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE



Was Jesus Real?

Matthew 16.13-18

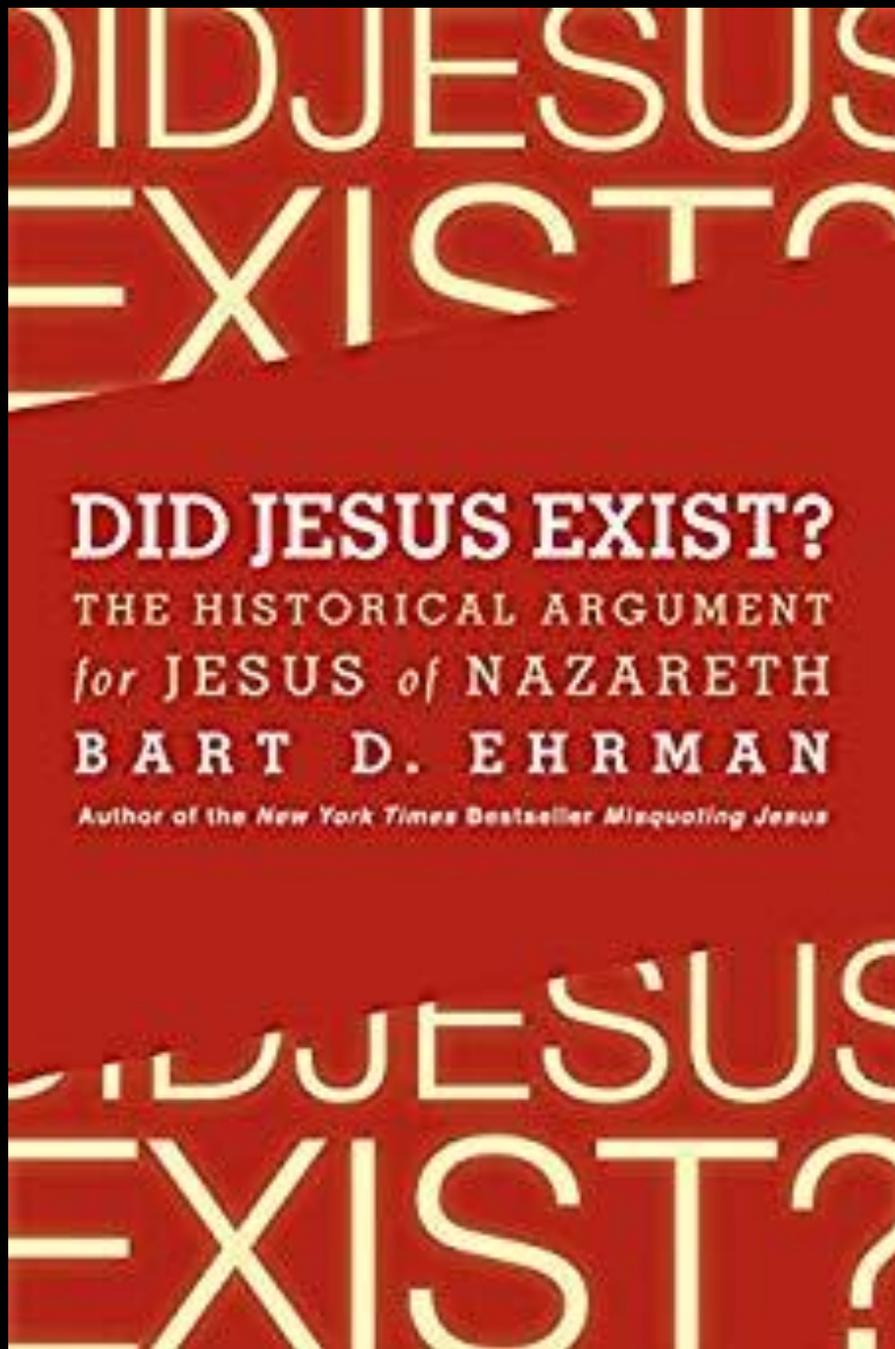
Studying  
the  
Historical  
JESUS

A GUIDE TO SOURCES AND METHODS



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# DID JESUS EXIST?



# DID JESUS EXIST?

What collateral proof is there in existence of the historical fact of the life of Jesus Christ? If the Bible account of his life is accurate, he should have caused sufficient interest to gain considerable comment in other histories and records of the time; but in fact (I am told), apart from obscure references in Josephus and the like, no mention is made?



# THE CHRIST CONSPIRACY

The Greatest Story  
Ever Sold



Acharya S

Acharya S.  
D.M. Murdock

# DID JESUS EXIST?

Bart Ehrman

The basic argument of the book is that Jesus is the sun-god: “Thus the son of God is the sun of God” (get it—son, sun?). Stories about Jesus are “in actuality based on the movements of the sun through the heavens.



# DID JESUS EXIST?

Bart Ehrman

“...all of Acharya’s major points are in fact wrong. Jesus was not invented in Alexandria, Egypt, in the middle of the second Christian century. He was known already in the 30s of the first century, in Jewish circles of Palestine.”



# DID JESUS EXIST?

The Challenge: Can we prove Jesus existed?



# DID JESUS EXIST?

Suetonius, Claudius 25.4 (AD 120)

“He expelled the Jews from Rome, on account of the riots in which they were constantly indulging, at the instigation of Chrestus.”



# DID JESUS EXIST?

Suetonius, Claudius 25.4 (AD 120)

- Suetonius is writing of Christian activity in AD 54 under the reign of Claudius.
- This shows that Christian views were established with 20 years of Jesus' death.



# DID JESUS EXIST?

Tacitus, Annals 15.44 (AD 64)

“Therefore, to squelch the rumor, Nero created scapegoats and subjected to the most refined tortures those whom the common people called “Christians,” [a group] hated for their abominable crimes. The author of this name, Christ, during the reign of Tiberius, had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate.”



# DID JESUS EXIST?

Pliny the Younger, Epistles 10.96–97  
(AD 98-117)

That it was their habit on a fixed day to assemble before daylight and recite by turns a form of words to Christ as a god and that they bound themselves with an oath, not for any crime, but not to commit theft or robbery or adultery, nor to break their word, and not to deny a deposit when demanded.



# DID JESUS EXIST?

## **Thallus** (AD 52)

- wrote of an earthquake and lunar eclipse to explain the circumstances around Jesus' death

Julius Africanus, *Chronology*, fragment 18  
(A.D. 170–240)

- Wrote a response to Thallus' argument



# DID JESUS EXIST?

## Mara Bar Sarapion (AD 73)

“What good did it do the Athenians to kill Socrates, for which deed they were punished with famine and pestilence? What did it avail the Samians to burn Pythagoras, since their country was entirely buried under sand in one moment? Or what did it avail the Jews to kill their wise king, since their kingdom was taken away from them from that time on? “



# DID JESUS EXIST?

**Flavius Josephus (c. A.D. 36–100).**

*Antiquities 18.63–64.*

“Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of surprising works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ.”



# Flavius Josephus (c. A.D. 36–100).

*Antiquities 18.63–64.*

“And when Pilate, at the suggestion of principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named for him, are not extinct to this day.



# DID JESUS EXIST?

The Challenge: Can we prove Jesus existed? Yes!

Suetonius (AD 120)

Tacitus (AD 64)

Pliny the Younger (AD 98-117)

**Thallus** (AD 52)

**Mara Bar Sarapion** (AD 73)

**Flavius Josephus** (AD 36–100).



DO WE KNOW WHAT  
JESUS SAID?



# DO WE KNOW WHAT JESUS SAID?

## **Challenge 1:**

**The Gospels were forged hundreds of years after the events they narrate.**



**Challenge 1:**

**The Gospels were forged hundreds of years after the events they narrate**

**Response: Bart Ehrman**

**In fact, the Gospels were written at the end of the first century, about thirty-five to sixty-five years after Jesus's death, and we have physical proof: one fragment of a Gospel manuscript dates to the early second century. How could it have been forged centuries after that?**



# DO WE KNOW WHAT JESUS SAID?

## **Challenge 2:**

**We have no manuscript of the New Testament that dates prior to the fourth century.**



**Challenge 2 :We have no manuscript of the New Testament that dates prior to the fourth century (26).**

**Response: Bart Ehrman**

**This is just plain wrong: we have numerous fragmentary manuscripts that date from the second and third centuries.**



# DO WE KNOW WHAT JESUS SAID?

## **Challenge 3:**

**It took well over a thousand years to canonize the New Testament,” and “many councils” were needed to differentiate the inspired from the spurious books.**



**Challenge 3: It took well over a thousand years to canonize the New Testament,” and “many councils” were needed to differentiate the inspired from the spurious books.**

**Response: Bart Ehrman**

**Actually, the first author to list our canon of the New Testament was the church father Athanasius in the year 367; the comment about “many councils” is simply made up.**



DO WE KNOW WHAT  
JESUS SAID?



WHAT NOW?



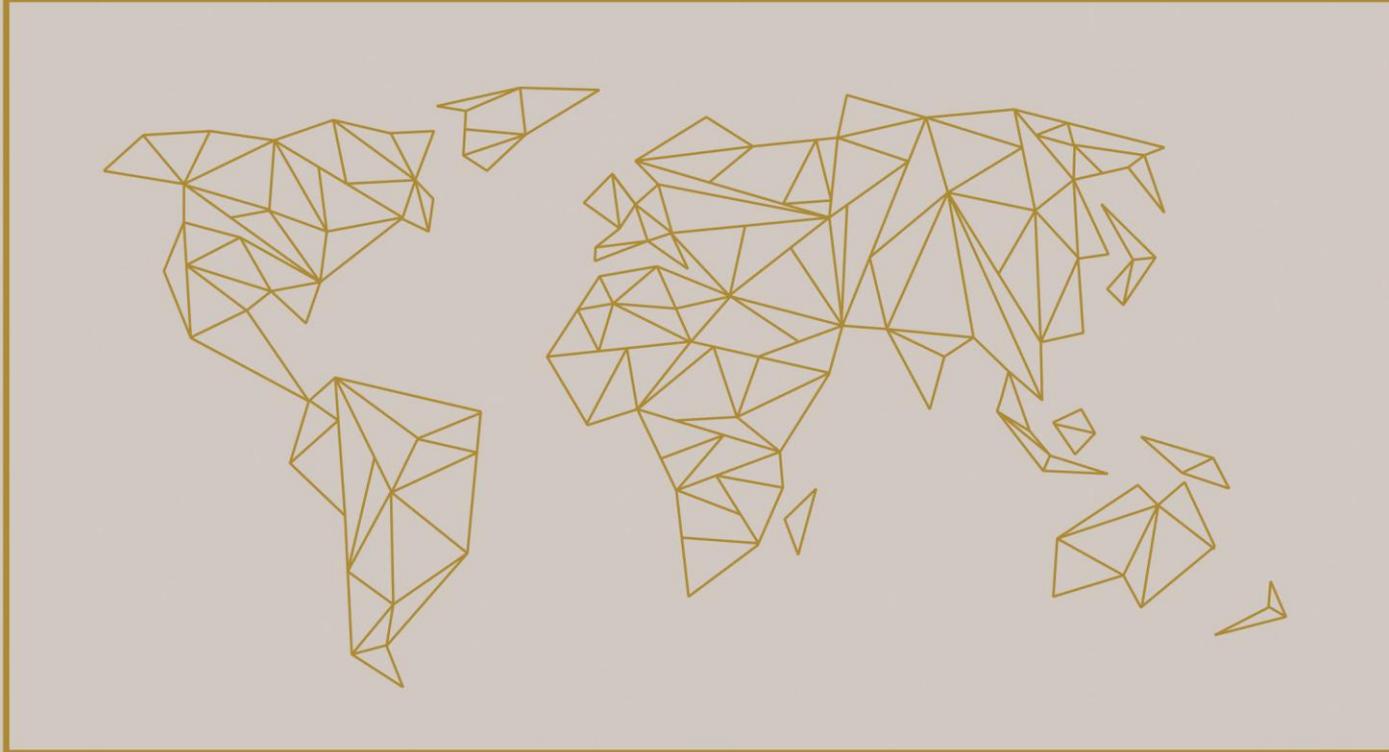
# WHAT NOW?

H. G. Wells

I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.



WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE



Was Jesus Real?

Matthew 16.13-18