

Did Jesus Exist? Probably Not



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First Order of Business

- ❖ **Consensus Untrustworthy:** Not valid when founded on logically fallacious methods (*Proving History*) and ignorance of key facts (*On the Historicity of Jesus*).
- ❖ **Ditto Mythicism:** I do not endorse nor will defend most mythicist arguments, many of which are amateur and often illogical or factually incorrect.
- ❖ **Presumptions Ought to Be Challenged:** Most originated with Christian scholars, and still adopted by secular scholars falsely assuming past work has been unbiased.

The Alternative Theory

- ❖ Jesus began as a **celestial being** (*archangel*), revealing truths to followers via **revelations** and **hidden messages** in scripture.
- ❖ Christianity began when this “being” revealed that he had tricked the Devil by **becoming incarnate** and **being crucified** by the Devil (*in the region of heavens ruled by Devil*).
- ❖ Thereby atoning for all of humanity's sins, so the End of the World could begin.
- ❖ Because they saw this promised in the scriptures: **Daniel 9, Jeremiah 23 & 25, Isaiah 53, Zechariah 3 & 6.**

The Divine Being Analogy

- ❖ **Islam:** Mohammed “hallucinates” conversations with the angel Gabriel and the Koran records the spoken teachings of Gabriel.
- ❖ **Mormonism:** Joseph Smith “hallucinates” conversations with the angel Moroni and seeing words on magical plates, and the Book of Mormon records what the latter two said.

What Happened

- ❖ Jesus was originally a celestial being like **Gabriel** or **Moroni**, and taught his followers in same way.
- ❖ Then he was “**Euhemerized**” (*stories created placing him on earth with other historical figures*).
- ❖ Then started believing or selling those stories as true.
- ❖ Because (a) Euhemerization was **common** and (b) made it easier to **control doctrine** (*inventing traditions to trump revelations*).

Why Believe That?

- ❖ Because it's typically what happens (Jewish **patriarchs**, pagan **savior gods**, modern **cargo cults**).
- ❖ And our **sequence of evidence** corresponds to it...

5 min?

Why Believe That?

1. Epistles only speak of a **pre-existent celestial being** and **revealed gospel**.
2. Gospels come later; wildly, deliberately **fictional**.
(Yet all subsequent historicity claims based on them.)
3. All *other* evidence from the first **eighty years** of Christianity's development conveniently not preserved *(not even in quotation or refutation)*.
4. And other evidence **forged** in its place (dozens of Gospels, Acts, fake Epistles, doctored passages).

Personal Savior Deities: All the Rage

- They are all “savior gods”
- They are all the “son” of God (*or “daughter”*)
- They all undergo a “passion” (*patheôn*)
- They all obtain victory over death, which they share with their followers
- They all have stories about them set in human history on earth
- Yet none of them ever actually existed

Dying-and-Rising Gods

- ❖ **Romulus:** Roman state god, his death and resurrection celebrated in annual plays.
- ❖ **Osiris:** Egyptian god, those baptized into his death and resurrection are saved in the afterlife.
- ❖ **Zalmoxis:** Thracian god, his death and resurrection assures followers of eternal life.

Philo of Alexandria Tells Us...

Philo, *Confusion of Tongues* 62-63,
146-47; *On Dreams* 1.215; etc.

- ❖ There was a pre-Christian Jewish belief in a celestial being **actually named “Jesus”** who was...
- ❖ The firstborn son of God...
- ❖ The celestial “image of God”
- ❖ God’s agent of creation...
- ❖ And God’s celestial high priest.

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Hebrews 2:17, 4:14, ...

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Philippians 2:5-11: Earliest known Christians believed this preexistent being descended, became incarnate and died, rose again, then appeared to select people to tell them this.

❖ And God's celestial high priest.

belief in a
"Jesus"

Romans 8:29

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On the Most Plausible Mythicist Theory: This incarnation, death, and burial took place in outer space just below the moon.

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❖ And God's celestial high priest.

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The same was taught of Osiris: public stories put him on earth, but private stories had his death and resurrection occur in outer space just below the moon.

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Precedents in the Jewish belief system: e.g. Adam was believed to have been buried in outer space (*Revelation of Moses*).

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sus”

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The Ascension of Isaiah

- ❖ Late 1st / early 2nd century “Gospel”
- ❖ prophet Isaiah receives a vision
- ❖ earliest (?) redaction lacks visit to earth
- ❖ Jesus is crucified by Satan in outer space

2 Peter 1:16

- ❖ “We did not follow **cleverly devised myths** ... we were **eyewitnesses** of his majesty!”
- ❖ Then immediately **forges** an eyewitness account of meeting Jesus on earth.
- ❖ To answer otherwise **unknown Christians** who were claiming such a Jesus was a “cleverly devised myth” (2 Peter 2:1).

How Jesus Communicated

- ❖ Jesus began as a **celestial being** (*archangel*), revealing truths to followers via **revelations** and **hidden messages** in scripture.
- ❖ This is stated several times in the Epistles.
- ❖ No references in the Epistles to Jesus preaching (*other than from heaven*), being a preacher, having a ministry, or choosing or having disciples, or communicating by any means other than revelation and scripture.
- ❖ **This is completely reversed in the Gospels.**

How Jesus Communicated

- ❖ **Romans 16:25-26:** “...the preaching of Jesus Christ [is] according to **revelation** of the mystery kept silent for all ages, but now manifested through the **scriptures**...”
- ❖ **Romans 10:14-17:** “How shall they call on him if they haven’t believed in him? And how shall they believe in him if they haven’t heard him? And how shall they hear [him] without a preacher? And how shall any preach, unless they are sent [as Apostles]?”
- ❖ **1 Corinthians 9:1:** “Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?”
- ❖ **2 Corinthians 12:1-9:** *Paul speaks of having many revelations from the celestial Jesus and even relays a two-way conversation he had with him.*

According to Paul

- ❖ **Scripture** and **Revelation** are the only sources of information Paul ever mentions anyone having.
- ❖ The Jesus he knows and refers to and speaks to is always in outer space.
- ❖ Paul never clearly places Jesus on earth or connects him to human history.

Paul's (Authentic) Letters

- ❖ **Galatians 1:11-12:** “brothers, the **gospel I preached** does not come from man. Neither did I **receive** it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through a **revelation** of Jesus Christ.”
- ❖ **1 Corinthians 15:1-8:** “brothers, the **gospel I preached** ... [is] what I also **received**: that **according to the scriptures** Christ died for our sins, and that he was buried, and that **according to the scriptures** he was raised on the third day, and that he **appeared** to Cephas [etc.] ... and at last he appeared to me as well.”
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Paul Often means “we are told by” **Preachers**

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Paul's (Authentic) Letters

❖ **Galatians**
from man.
it came to

This means Paul *hallucinated* the original supper, and thus received teachings from the *dead* Jesus (even quotes him, just as he does in 2 Corinthians 12).

❖ **1 Corinth**

I also **received**: that **according to the scriptures** Christ died for our sins, and that he was buried, and that **according to the scriptures** he was raised on the third day, and that he **appeared** to Cephas [etc.] ... and at last he appeared to me as well.”

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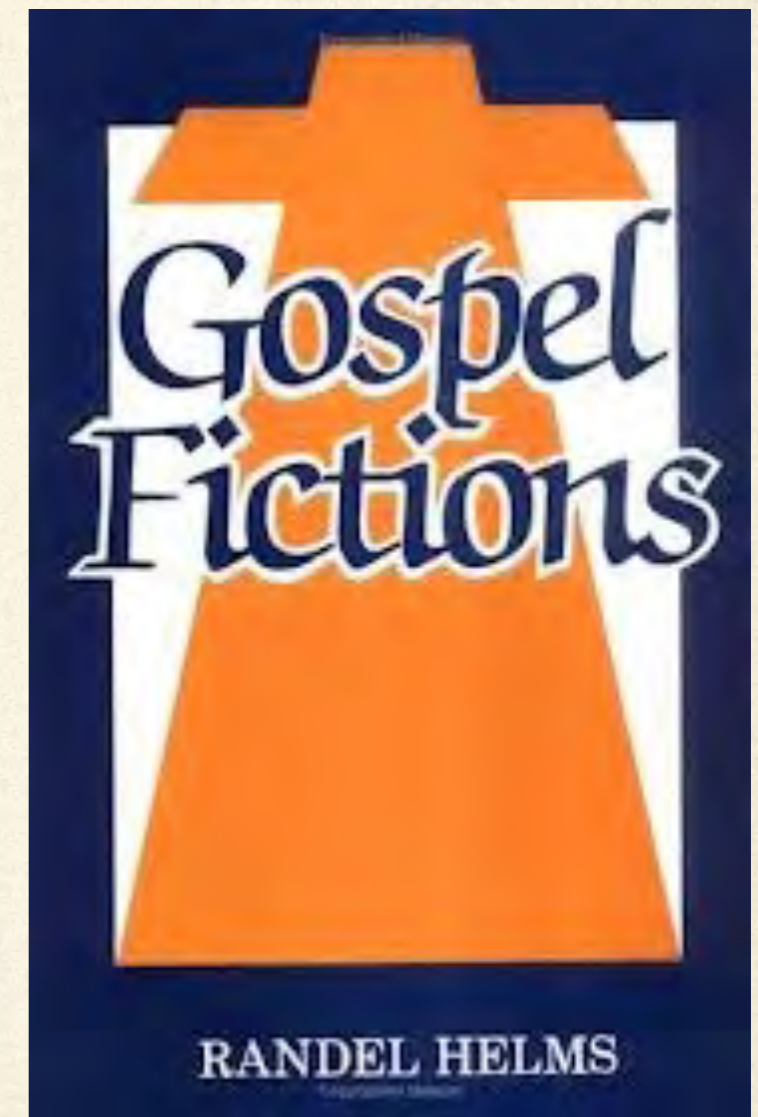
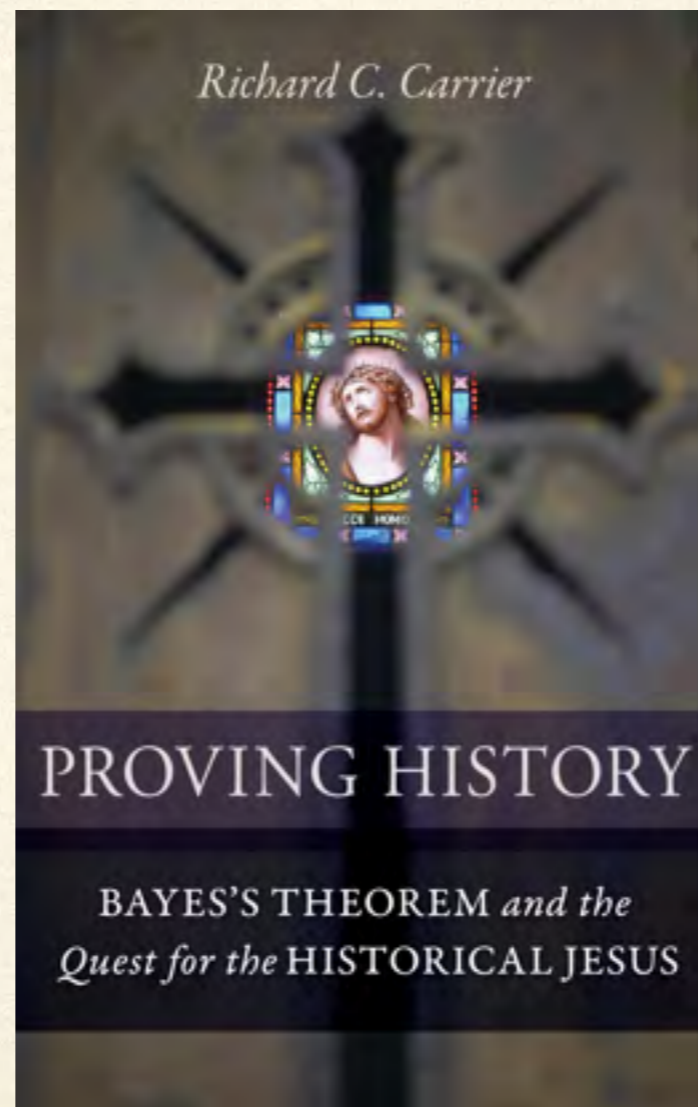
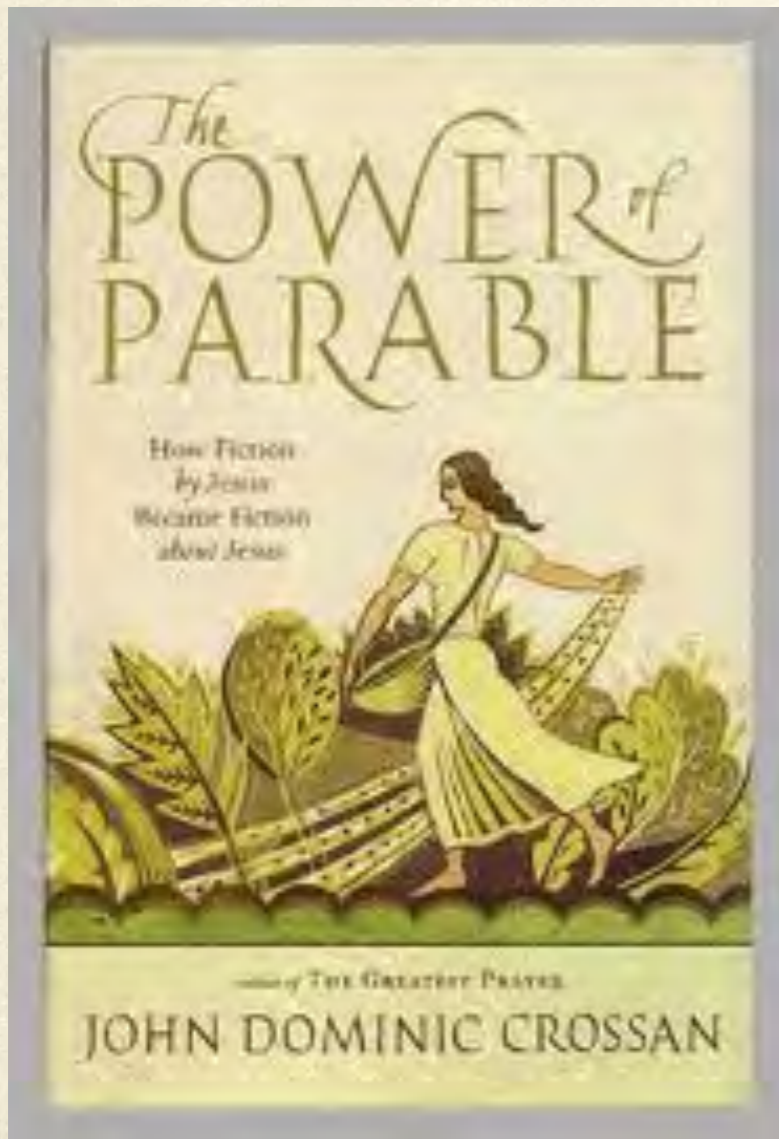
Does Paul Mention Earthly Family?

- ❖ **Brothers of the Lord?** Means “baptized Christians”
- ❖ **Born (= Made) of the Sperm of David:** Means divine manufacture, not descent.
- ❖ **Born (= Made) of a Woman:** Paul says this is an allegory (*Gal. 4*).

Gospels

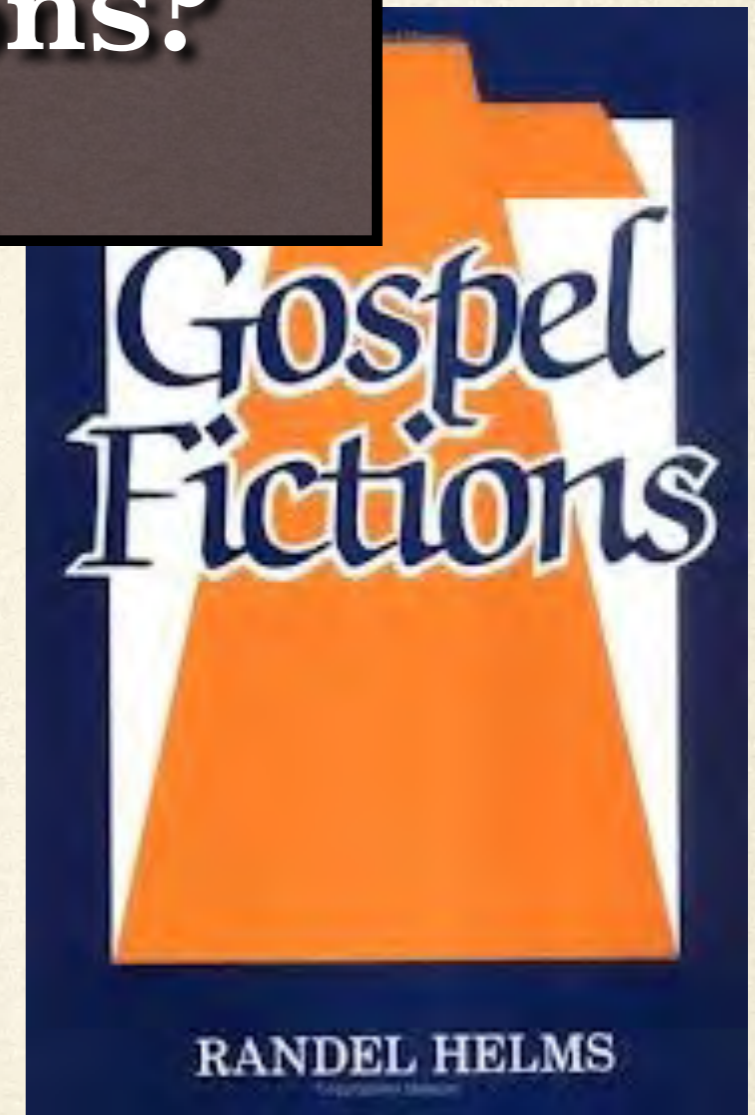
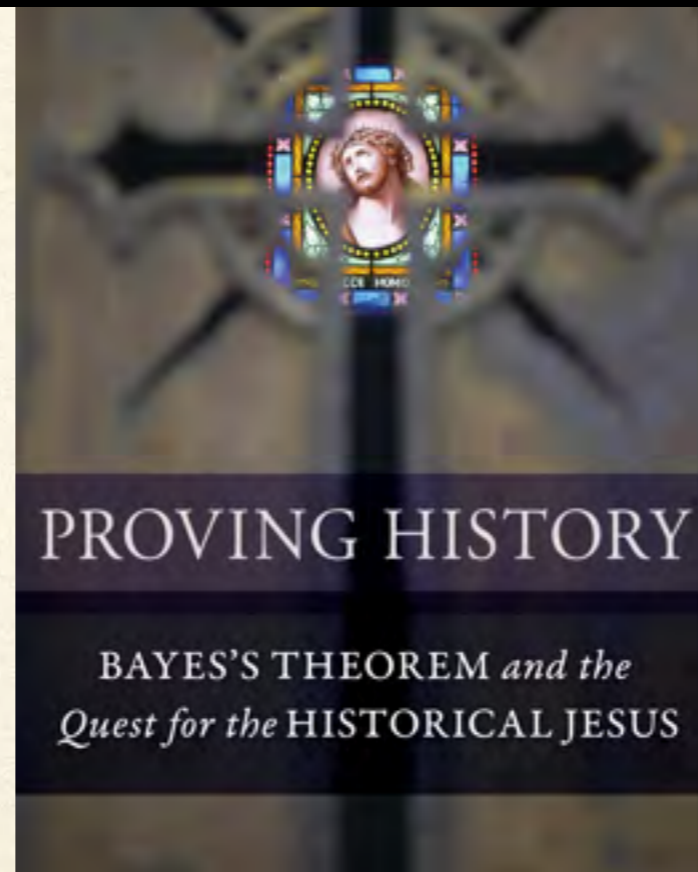
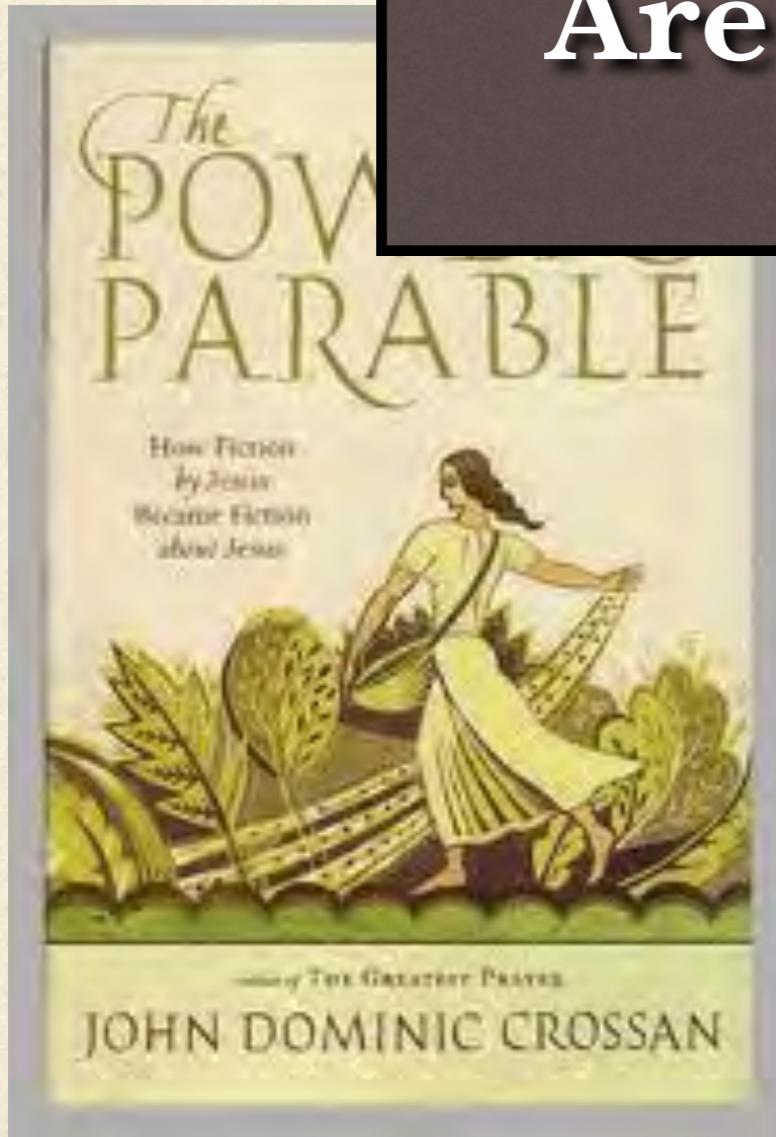
- ❖ The Gospels come decades after fact and are the **first we hear** of an earthly story for Jesus.
- ❖ The Gospels are **wildly fictitious** in their content and structure.
- ❖ Every story has discernible **allegorical** or **propagandistic** intent.
- ❖ The first (Mark) looks like an extended **meta-parable** (*outsiders are told a story, while insiders are told what it really means*). [Mark 4:11-12]

Gospels as Parables



Gospels as Parables

Are there exceptions?



No Other Evidence...

- ❖ Everything else is either **not independent** (*they just echo the Gospels or what Christians said the Gospels say*)...
- ❖ Or is **fabricated** (*e.g. the Infancy Gospels, Jesus' Letter to Abgar, the forged epistles in the NT and beyond*)

The Roswell Analogy

- ❖ **What Really Happened:** A guy found some sticks and tinfoil in the desert.
- ❖ **What Was Said to Have Happened:** It was debris from an alien spacecraft.
- ❖ **What Was Said to Have Happened within just *Thirty Years*:** An entire flying saucer was recovered, complete with alien bodies that were autopsied by the government.

The Roswell Analogy

- ❖ The “**tinfoil in the desert**” would be analogous to the “**revelations of the archangel named Jesus**”
- ❖ And the “**flying saucer and alien bodies**” would be analogous to the “**historical Jesus of Galilee.**”
- ❖ Imagine if we only had the stories written by the *Roswell believers* from thirty years later (and information derived from them), and *nothing else...*
- ❖ We would not know about the tinfoil. All we would have are **multiple witnesses and sources** reporting a flying saucer recovery and alien body autopsy.
- ❖ **Neither of which ever existed.**

Richard C. Carrier



PROVING HISTORY

BAYES'S THEOREM *and the*
Quest for the HISTORICAL JESUS

On the Historicity of Jesus

Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt



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First Order of Business

- ❖ **Dr. Crook is right:** We agree on far more than we disagree. And I agree with most of his opening statement.

The Challenge

- ❖ **Gospel Trajectory?** Dr. Crook claims Jesus starts out as an ordinary historical man and becomes mythical over time.
- ❖ **Pauline Attestation?** Dr. Crook claims Paul says Jesus had a mother and brothers, therefore he was historical.

Gospel Trajectory?

- ❖ **Dr. Crook is wrong** that only by the time we get to John is “Jesus there at the start of creation.” That view is already in Paul, decades before even Mark wrote his Gospel.
- ❖ **So the trajectory Dr. Crook describes isn’t there.** Mark mythologizes a celestial being into an earthly man in the same way historical biographies historicized *other* celestial beings: Osiris, Romulus, even Zeus & Uranus.

Preceding Mark

- ❖ **Andrew Chester, *Early Christianity*, vol. 2 (2011)** and **Sean McDonough, *Christ as Creator: Origins of a New Testament Doctrine* (2009).**
- ❖ **Philippians 2:5-11:** “Christ Jesus, **existing in the form of god**, did not consider equality with God something to be seized, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, **being made** in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yes, the death of the cross.”

Preceding Mark

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 8:6:** “to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, **through whom are all things**, and we through him” (*cf. Col. 1:12-20; Heb. 1:1-4, 2:10*).
- ❖ **1 Corinthians 10:4:** *Paul says Christ was present in the time of Moses.*
- ❖ **Romans 8:29:** “His Son” was “the firstborn” (thus, as per Philo, preceding even Adam).
- ❖ **Romans 8:3:** “God **sent** his own Son in the likeness of sinful man” (*cf. Rom. 1:3, Gal. 4:4*).

Gospel Trajectory?

- ❖ The mythologizing that ensued after Mark was *historicizing*.
- ❖ ...making Jesus a more grandiose *earthly* figure, with even *firmer* claims to eyewitness evidence of his *earthly* existence.
- ❖ Compare Matthew, Luke, and John on the resurrection.
- ❖ Mark, meanwhile, is creating **literary fictions** for **allegorical purposes**.
- ❖ **For example:** his empty tomb account is rife with scriptural allusions about the meaning of the resurrection and the gospel that don't depend on the story being true.

Gospel Trajectory?

- ❖ Dr. Crook's examples are only of later Gospels not liking the earlier Gospels and changing them. **They are not evidence that they had any knowledge of a historical Jesus.** Or that Mark did.
- ❖ **e.g. Baptism by John is fiction** (*Proving History*, pp. 145-48):
 - ❖ (1) Mark's story is a literary model for Christian baptism (being cleansed of sin and then being adopted as God's son).
 - ❖ (2) that also co-opts the authority of John (by having him declare Jesus his successor and superior).
 - ❖ (3) only when Jesus was fully historicized (*and this story then read literally*) did this create a problem that later authors had to fix.
 - ❖ (4) none of their changes reflect any knowledge of a historical Jesus.

Earthly Parents?

- ❖ **Born (= Made) of a Woman:** in context (Gal. 4) this is allegorical, explaining we are born of the same woman (*the slavegirl = the corrupt world subject to the Torah law*) but thanks to Jesus we will be reborn of another woman (*the freewoman = the celestial world*)

Born or Made?

- ❖ **Romans 1:3 and Galatians 4:4:** Paul uses *genomenos* (from *ginomai*), “to happen, become, be made.”
- ❖ Paul never uses that word of a human birth, despite using it hundreds of times (typically to mean ‘being’ or ‘becoming’).
- ❖ His preferred word for being born is *gennaô* (Rom. 9:11 and Gal. 4:23, 29, yet notably not 4:4).

Born or Made?

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 15:45:** Paul says Adam “was made” (same word). Not a reference to being born but to being constructed directly by God.
- ❖ **Likewise in 1 Corinthians 15:37:** Paul uses same word of our future resurrection body, which is also not born but directly manufactured by God (2 Cor. 5:1-5).
- ❖ **Romans 1:3 and Galatians 4:4:** Same implication.

Brothers of the Lord

- ❖ Jesus is “**the firstborn among many brethren**” (Romans 8.29) because **all** baptized Christians are Brothers of the Lord (*by adoption*: Romans 8:15-29; Galatians 3:26-29; etc.).
- ❖ **1 Corinthians 9 and Galatians 1**: Paul always uses the full phrase “Brothers of the Lord” instead of just “Brothers” when speaking of non-apostolic Christians and Apostles in the same sentence.
- ❖ **1 Cor. 9**: Paul means that if even **non-apostolic Christians** on church business have a right to church support for a wife, so should Paul, who outranked them.
- ❖ Paul **never** otherwise refers to Jesus having *biological* brothers and **never** feels any need to distinguish between the Lord’s biological and *cultic* brothers.

James the Apostle?

- ❖ **Galatians 1:** “I did not go to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me ... [until] after three years I went ... to visit Cephas ... **but another of the apostles saw I none, except James the Lord’s brother.**”
- ❖ **L. Paul Trudinger** (*Novum Testamentum* vol. 17, July 1975): “this would certainly be an odd way for Paul to say that he met only two apostles, Peter and James.”

James the Apostle?

- ❖ The Greek actually says: “**other than the apostles I saw only James,**” meaning this James was *not an apostle*. **Christian presumption has overlooked this.**
- ❖ Ordinarily, to say you saw “no other apostle” you would write *heteron ton apostolon ouk* (compare Rom. 7.23; 13.9; etc.) or *oudena heteron tōn apostolōn* (as Paul usually does: e.g. 1 Cor. 1.14; 2.8; 9.15; etc.) or things similar.
- ❖ But Paul instead chose the unusual (and for Paul, unprecedented) construction *heteron tōn apostolōn*. Without *oudeis*, **the word *heteron* plus the genitive** in this fashion usually means “**other than,**” rather than “**another of.**”

Extra-Biblical Evidence

- ❖ **“Thallus and the Darkness at Christ’s Death.”** *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 8 (2011-2012): 185-91.
- ❖ **“Origen, Eusebius, and the Accidental Interpolation in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 20.200.”** *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 20 (Winter 2012).

**Assumptions Underly Every
Rebuttal**

**Those Assumptions Originated
with Christians**

Gospel Trajectory?

- ❖ **Lack of a virgin birth in Mark:** Mark had no use for a birth narrative for his missionary allegory. Only historicists had need of it.
- ❖ **Mark 3:21:** Mark created a story as a model for how Christians were treated (*accused of being possessed by demons*) using Jesus as a model for how to respond (hence his speech: **3:23-30**). Only when taken literally did elements of this fiction become a problem.
- ❖ The **entirety** of Mark 3 is a series of responses to typical things Christian missionaries faced.
- ❖ Paul never once mentions Jesus ever being an exorcist or a healer. That is Mark's invention (*or that of a previous lost Gospel*).
- ❖ Mark is using Jesus as a model for Christian missionaries to use, who *were* healers and exorcists. *That's what myths were for.*

Gospel Trajectory?

- ❖ **Mark 1:1:** That copyists fought over whether to call Jesus the “son of God” in Mark is moot. Paul **already** says he was the Son of God—and that he even existed as such before his incarnation. So the trajectory is the other way around: **Mark is downplaying the gospel of a celestial Son** preached for decades before him, in order to create an allegorical fiction rather than a literal one.
- ❖ **1 Timothy** is a second century forgery and **Luke 2:40-43** is an obviously fictional story. Forgeries and fictions have no value as evidence here.

Gospel Trajectory?

- ❖ **Mark 1:32-34:** Obviously fictional story. There are no demons, so Jesus can't have ever "really" been forbidding them to speak. Mark is inventing that. Later authors then changed *his fiction*.
- ❖ **John 10:18:** That Jesus could raise himself is an example of a historicist wanting to magnify the fiction. It does not indicate any real knowledge of a historical Jesus. The celestial Jesus was **always** raised by God (Philippians 2). It is only *later historicists* like John who had a problem with that.

Gospel Trajectory?

- ❖ **Mark 11:13:** Obviously fictional story.
- ❖ People can't wither fig trees.
- ❖ Nor would any real person curse one for not bearing figs out of season.
- ❖ The entire story is an allegory for God's abandonment of the temple (the fig tree).
- ❖ **R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred Violence and the Messiah"**

INCLUSIO

- The dying twelve year old girl
- The woman bleeding twelve years
- The dying twelve year old girl

- Jesus and the cursed fig tree
- Jesus clears the temple
- Jesus and the cursed fig tree

Gospel Trajectory?

- ❖ **Mark 8:23-25:** Mark is constructing a fictional narrative based on the miracles of Moses.
- ❖ The healed man sees the people as trees just as Moses summoned a tree to heal the people (Ex. 15: tree goes in water to fix it = water (*spit*) goes on blindness to fix it = both stories feature seeing a tree).
- ❖ **The story is obvious fiction:** people who are actually blind can't be healed this way, and people psychosomatically blind don't see people as trees on the way to being "cured."

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