



DUPED?

QUESTIONING THE LOGIC
OF POP SPIRITUALITY



Part 5: Did Jesus Exist?

INTRODUCTION — The Power of Persuasion

Zeitgeist is a German word meaning the spirit of the age (*Zeit*, time; *Geist*, spirit). Ironically, Peter Joseph has fallen prey to the Gnostic zeitgeist of today rather than offering historically or spiritually meaningful information. Jesus-myth theories are currently in vogue, especially among the uneducated and uninformed. Do your homework before buying into the zeitgeist.

Positive Evidence For The Historical Jesus

- A QUICK ANSWER TO A SILLY QUESTION – DID JESUS EXIST?

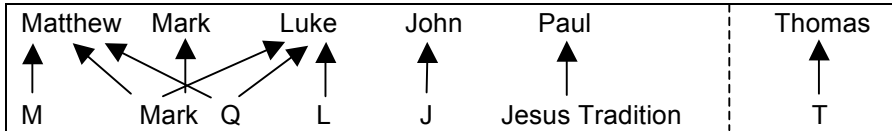
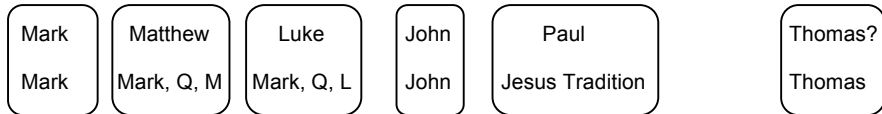
Let's be clear, the teaching of Jesus as presented in the Gospels and Epistles is strikingly original and shows no signs of being borrowed from other religions, other Jewish teachers, or assembled by committee. It is firmly grounded within a first-century Jewish context (not a cosmic pagan mindset) and only makes sense against its Jewish backdrop. It demands the existence of a single point of origin, a radical revolutionary mind within first-century Judaism. The *concept* of Jesus is irreducibly enmeshed with the *teaching* of Jesus which is deeply rooted in the first-century Jewish *context* of Jesus. The person who originated this teaching existed. There is no other option.

e.g., **Matthew 5-7; Mark 2, 7, 12, etc.**

- THE EARLIEST EVIDENCE – PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

JESUS' LIFE | ← (What fills the gap?) → | WRITTEN GOSPELS

Writings & Their Sources...



- SECONDARY EVIDENCE – JESUS OUTSIDE THE BIBLE

Thallus / Mara bar Serapion / Celsus / Lucian of Samostata
Pliny the Younger / Seutonius / Tacitus / Josephus

CONCLUSION – Doing Your Own Research

The less our understanding of Jesus is shaped by the existing historical documents, the more it will be shaped by our own agendas.

Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH...

Popular Books

- *Lord or Legend?*, by Gregory A. Boyd and Paul Rhodes Eddy
- *Shattering the Christ Myth*, by James Patrick Holding (Editor)
- *Unmasking the Pagan Christ*, by Stanley E. Porter and Stephen J. Bedard
- *Can We Trust the Gospels?*, by Mark D. Roberts
- *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, by Gary R. Habermas and Michael R. Licona
- *Conspiracies and the Cross*, by Timothy Paul Jones
- *The Case for the Real Jesus*, by Lee Strobel
- *The End of Religion*, by Bruxy Cavey (part 2, re. Jewish context for Christ's teaching)

Academic Books

- *The Jesus Legend*, by Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd
- *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, by Craig L. Blomberg
- *What Are the Gospels? (2nd Edition)*, by Richard A. Burridge
- *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, by Richard Bauckham
- *Redating the New Testament*, John A.T. Robinson
- *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, by Robert E. Van Voorst
- *The Riddle of Resurrection*, by Trygve N. D. Mettinger

TMH Teaching Series

- *God At The Bookstore: The Pagan Christ*
- *A Letter From Prison, Part 10: Responding To Questions*
- *God's Library*

Internet

- www.tektonics.org
- www.zeitgeistchallenge.org

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. Have you seen or talked to someone who has seen Zeitgeist? What was your/their reaction?
2. Take time to review this week's message. Talk about what most challenged, puzzled, or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

3. N.T. Wright says that if Christ's teachings are like a symphony, then Jesus is the composer, the church is the orchestra, and Paul is the conductor. Paul didn't originate the "music" of Christ's teaching, but he is trying to organize and encourage the church to live it out in practical, sustainable ways. With that in mind, look at three examples of Jesus' teaching being worked out in Paul's writings. For each comparison answer the following: a) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? b) What is the key principle in Christ's teaching and how is Paul trying to get the church to live it out? c) How can we (individually and collectively) do a better job of living this principle out today? Talk about examples.

- **Romans 12:14-21; 1 Thess. 5:15 // Matthew 5:38-44; Luke 6:27-29 (Q)**
- **Romans 13:1-7 // Mark 12:13-17; John 19:10-11**
- **Romans 14:1-15:3 // Matthew 7:1-5; Mark 7:14-23; John 15:13**

SO WHAT?...

4. In 30 seconds or less, how would you respond to someone who claimed that Jesus never existed? Where would you want to take the conversation if you had an hour?

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, May 17, 2009