

Counterfeit Christs

A study of false saviors and false salvation

"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." - John 8:24

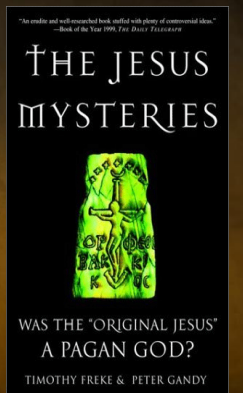
Counterfeit Christs

The Counterfeit Christ of Mythology

"The reality is, Jesus was the Solar Deity of the Gnostic Christian sect and like all other Pagan gods, he was a mythical figure."
- Internet Movie Zeitgeist

"Why should we consider the stories of Osiris, Dionysus, Adonis, Attis, Mithras, and the other pagan mystery saviors as fables, yet come across essentially the same story told in a Jewish context and believe it to be the biography of a carpenter from Bethlehem?"
- Timothy Freke/ Peter Gandy

"The Jesus Mysteries" was a very important book for me in leaving Christianity..."
- Skeptic Forum Post



“The reality is, Jesus was the Solar Deity of the Gnostic Christian sect and like all other Pagan gods, he was a mythical figure. It was the political establishment that sought to historize the Jesus figure for social control. By 325 a.d. in Rome, emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicea. It was during this meeting that the politically motivated Christian Doctrines were established and thus began a long history of Christian bloodshed and spiritual fraud.”
- Zeitgeist Transcript





Questions That Need Answers:

1. Did Jesus of Nazareth actually live?
2. Where do these claims of a mythological Jesus come from and what are they?
3. Was the Person of Jesus distorted into something much more by His disciples or others?

A Warning about Discernment

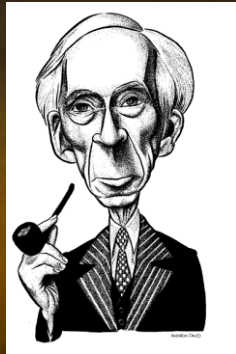
“Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced... more true than truth itself.”
- Irenaeus



Did Jesus of Nazareth actually live?

“Historically it is quite doubtful whether Christ ever existed at all, and if he did we know nothing about him.”

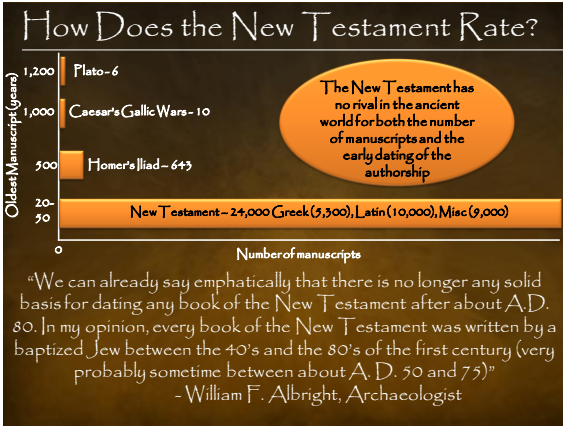
– Bertrand Russell
Why I am not a Christian, 16



How History is Understood/Believed

Eyewitness accounts that were accurately and faithfully recorded by those who can be trusted.

1. Bibliographical Test – how reliable are the manuscripts we have and how early is the dating?
2. Internal Evidence Test – is the document free of contradictions and do the accounts match?
3. External Evidence Test – is their external evidence that corroborates the document’s testimony?



Extra-Biblical Writings of Jesus

"At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders."

- Antiquities 18.3.3 (undisputed rendering)

Extra-Biblical Writings of Jesus - Enemy Attestation

"Nero substituted as culprits and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men loathed for their vices whom the crowd styled Christians. Christus, from whom they got their name, had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was emperor."

- Tacitus (Roman historian), Annals, Book 15.

"They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang an anthem to Christ as God, and bound themselves by a solemn oath not to commit any wicked deed..."

- Pliny the Younger, Letters, series 10.

"On the eve of Passover Yeshua was hanged ... since nothing was brought forward in his favour he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!"

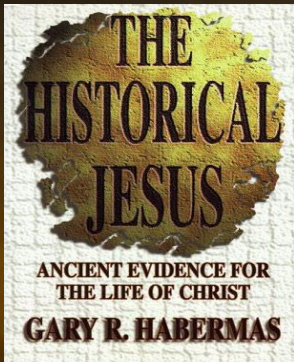
- Jewish Talmud, Sanhedrin 43a.

Jesus is referenced by more historians of antiquity than the Roman emperor at the time (Jesus' 43 vs. Tiberius' 10).

“Today no competent scholar denies the historicity of Jesus.”
- Bruce Metzger, Ph.D.



For More Information on the Historicity of Christ...



Where do these claims of a mythological Jesus come from and what are they?

Two Points to Keep in Mind



1. The seriousness of any truth claim dictate the amount of evidence necessary to support it.
2. The evidence should follow accepted scholarly standards (e.g. use of original sources, early dating of sources close to the event, consistency in reports, etc.)

Sources for Mythological Jesus Claims

Although some may argue for the participation of other, earlier historical figures, most historians peg the start of these claims with a man named Bruno

Bauer (1809 – 1882). Bauer was a German theologian, philosopher and historian who looked at the sources of the New Testament and controversially concluded that early Christianity owed more to Greek philosophy (Stoicism) than to Judaism. Starting in 1840, **he began a series of controversial works arguing that Jesus was a myth**, a second century fusion of Jewish, Greek, and Roman theology. His work was picked up by

Albert Kalthoff (1850-1906) who followed Bauer's extreme skepticism about the historical Jesus. Kalthoff went **so far as to claim that Jesus of Nazareth never existed and was not the founder of Christianity.**



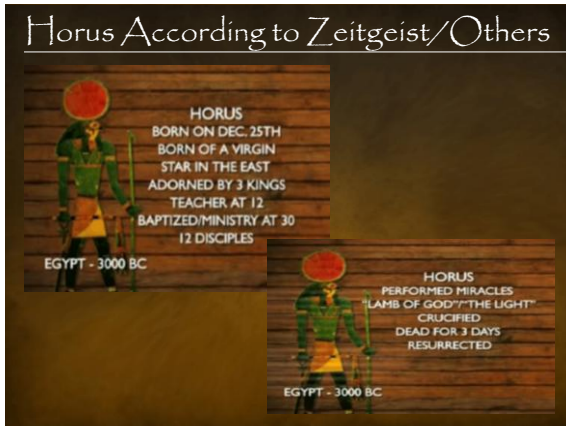
Sources for Mythological Jesus Claims

After Bauer and Kalthoff came others, with the most notable being James Frazer who wrote a work entitled

The Golden Bough where he argued the theory of there being widespread worship of dying and rising fertility gods in various places - Tammuz in Mesopotamia, Adonis in Syria, Attis in Asia Minor, and Osiris in Egypt. Frazer's view has been adopted by many who little realize its fragile foundations, with the explanation of the Christian Resurrection by such a comparative-religions approach even being reflected in official Soviet propaganda. In the 1930s three influential French scholars, M. Goguel, C. Guignebert, and A. Loisy, added to Frazer's claims by

interpreting Christianity as a syncretistic religion formed under the influence of Hellenistic mystery religions. And today, modern propagators of this thinking include the producers of the internet movie *Zeitgeist*, Dan Brown, and Freke and Gandy.





Horus According to Zeitgeist/Others

Horus of Egypt

"Egypt, the primeval seat of learning, was the high seat of Sun adoration. The Sphinx, with the face to the east, represents Hammachus, young Horus, or the rising Sun. The orb is Osiris, the ruling god of day. In its descent it is the dying deity, going below to the land of shades; but only to be resurrected as the victorious Horus, piercing the head of the dragon of darkness." James Horwicz, *Irish Druids & Old Irish Religions*

The Egyptian sun god Horus, who predated the Christ character by thousands of years, shares the following in common with Jesus:

- Horus was born of the virgin Isis-Meri on December 25th in a cave/manger with his birth being announced by a star in the East and attended by three wise men.
- His earthly father was named "Seb" ("Joseph"). Seb is also known as "Geb"; "As Horus the Elder he...was believed to be the son of Geb and Nut." Lewis Spence, *Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends*, 84.
- He was of royal descent.
- At age 12, he was a child teacher in the Temple, and at 30, he was baptized, having disappeared for 18 years.
- Horus was baptized in the river Eridanus or Iarutana (Jordan) by "Anup the Baptizer" ("John the Baptist"), who was decapitated.
- He had 12 disciples, two of whom were his "witnesses" and were named "Anup" and "Aan" (the two "Johns").
- He performed miracles, exorcised demons and raised El-Azarus ("El-Osiris"), from the dead.
- Horus walked on water.
- His personal epithet was "Iusa," the "ever-becoming son" of "Ptah," the "Father." He was thus called "Holy Child."
- He delivered a "Sermon on the Mount" and his followers recounted the "Sayings of Iusa."
- Horus was transfigured on the Mount.
- He was killed, buried for three days in a tomb, and resurrected.
- He was also the "Way, the Truth, the Light," "Messiah," "God's Anointed Son," the "Son of Man," the "Good Shepherd," the "Lamb of God," the "Word made flesh," the "Word of Truth," etc.
- He was "the Fisher" and was associated with the Fish ("Tchthys"), Lamb and Lion.
- He came to fulfill the Law.
- Horus was called "the ST," or "Anointed One."
- Like Jesus, "Horus was supposed to reign one thousand years."

Isis and Horus

Horus According to History/Truth

- Horus was born to Isis; no mention in history of her being called "Mary"
- Mary is our anglicized form of real name 'Miryam' or Miriam
- Isis not a virgin; widow of Osiris who conceived Horus with Osiris
- Horus born during month of *Khoiak* (Oct/Nov), not Dec 25th
 - Dec 25th celebration of Christ's birth did not occur until 4th century and linked to Winter solstice celebration. Bible never assigns birth date to Christ
- No record of three kings visiting Horus at birth
 - "Kings" didn't visit Christ at His birth – magi (king makers) did. Bible never states the number of magi that came
- Horus not a "savior" in any shape or form
- No account records Horus being a child teacher at age 12
- Horus not "baptized". Only account of Horus and water incident described in one story of Horus being torn to pieces, with Isis requesting the crocodile god to fish him out of the water he was placed into
- Horus did not have a "ministry"
- Horus did not have 12 disciples. According to the Horus accounts, Horus had four semi-gods that were followers and some indications of 16 human followers and an unknown number of blacksmiths that went into battle with him

Horus According to History/Truth

- No account of Horus being betrayed by a friend
- Horus did not die by crucifixion.
- Zeitgeist pegs Horus account at 3,000 B.C., long before crucifixion was practiced
- Various accounts have Horus being dismembered by Set and his bodyparts being scattered throughout the earth. Others combine Horus and Osiris together and him being torn apart and thrown into a river
- Horus did not die a death for others as Jesus did
- Horus not buried for three days
- Horus not resurrected. No account of Horus coming out of the grave with the body he went in with. Some accounts have Horus/Osiris being brought back to life by Isis and going to be the lord of the underworld.
- Left eye of Horus gouged out, which supposedly explained why the moon, which it represented, was so weak compared to the sun. It was also said that during a new-moon, Horus had become blinded and was titled Mekhenty-er-irty (mĥnty r ir.ty 'He who has no eyes'), while when the moon became visible again, he was re-titled Kĥenty-irty (ĥnty r ir.ty 'He who has eyes').

Krishna According to Zeitgeist/Others



Krishna According to History/Truth

- 8th child of Devaki (not a virgin...) who conceived Krishna from hairs off the head of Vishnu being placed in her womb. Eight incarnation of Vishnu
- No mention of star in the east
- Krishna married to wife Radha. Usually depicted as teacher and young cowherd who has lively relationships with cow maidens
- Gained victory over a demon king
- Usually colored black or dark blue and plays a flute
- Krishna killed by an arrow from a hunter who accidentally shot him in the heel ("A fierce hunter of the name of Jara then came there, desirous of deer. The hunter, mistaking [Krishna], who was stretched on the earth in high Yoga, for a deer, pierced him at the heel with a shaft and quickly came to that spot for capturing his prey." Mahabharata, Book 16, 4)

Krishna According to History/Truth

- Krishna died and ascended; no resurrection back in this life ("He [the hunter] touched the feet of [Krishna]. The high-souled one comforted him and then ascended upwards, filling the entire welkin with splendour... [Krishna] reached his own inconceivable region." Mahabharata, Book 16, 4)
- "There are no Indian gods portrayed as crucified." Dr. Edwin Bryant, Professor of Hinduism at Rutgers University, scholar on Hinduism. In 2001, he translated the Bhagavata-Purana (life of Krishna) for Penguin World Classics; author of *In Quest of Historical Krishna*.
- What Jewish settlements in India have been found or copies of Hindu documents in Israel that the Jews could have copied and used?

Mike Licona Investigates Acharya and Krishna

"Dr. Edwin Bryant, Professor of Hinduism at Rutgers University is a scholar on Hinduism. As of the writing of this paper, he has just translated the Bhagavata-Purana (life of Krishna) for Penguin World Classics and is currently writing a book to be titled, *In Quest of Historical Krishna*.

When I informed him that Ms. Murdock wrote an article claiming that Krishna had been crucified, he replied, "That is absolute and complete nonsense. There is absolutely no mention anywhere which alludes to a crucifixion." He also added that Krishna was killed by an arrow from a hunter who accidentally shot him in the heel. He died and ascended. It was not a resurrection. The sages who came there for him could not really see it."

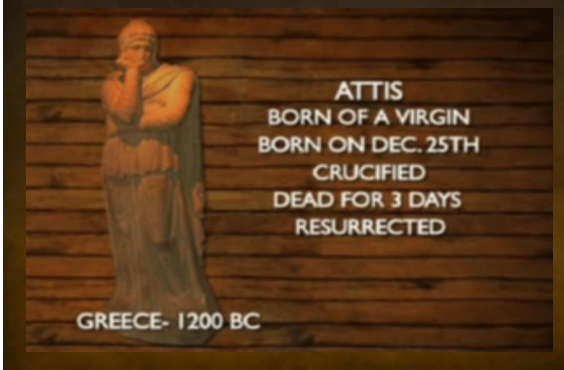
Ms. Murdock further claims that Christianity has failed in India because "the Brahmins have recognized Christianity as a relatively recent imitation of their much older traditions." To this, Dr. Bryant simply commented, "Stupid comment."

Mike Licona Investigates Acharya and Krishna

"Later I emailed him (Dr. Bryant) regarding her 24 comparisons of Krishna to Jesus which the reader may find in *The Christ Conspiracy*. He stated that 14 of her 24 comparisons are wrong and a 15th is partially wrong. What about her 9 that are correct; especially Krishna's virgin birth, the story of the tyrant who had thousands of infants killed (a parallel to Herod), and Krishna's bodily ascension? Benjamin Walker in his book, *The Hindu World: An Encyclopedic Survey of Hinduism* provides an answer. After tracing similarities related to the birth, childhood, and divinity of Jesus, as well as the late dating of these legendary developments in India, "[t]here can be no doubt that the Hindus borrowed the tales [from Christianity], but not the name." Bryant also comments that these parallels come from the Bhagavata Purana and the Harivamsa. Bryant believes the former "to be prior to the 7th century AD (although many scholars have hitherto considered it to be 11th century AD)." Yet this is hundreds of years after the Gospel accounts. Of the Harivamsa, Bryant is uncertain concerning its date.

However, most sources seem to place its composition between the fourth and sixth centuries, again hundreds of years after the Gospel accounts had been in circulation. An earlier date is entertained by David Mason of the University of Wisconsin, who states that there is no consensus on the dating that he is aware of but that it may be as early as the second century. Even if this early date is accurate, it is still after the Gospels, not before as Murdock's thesis requires."

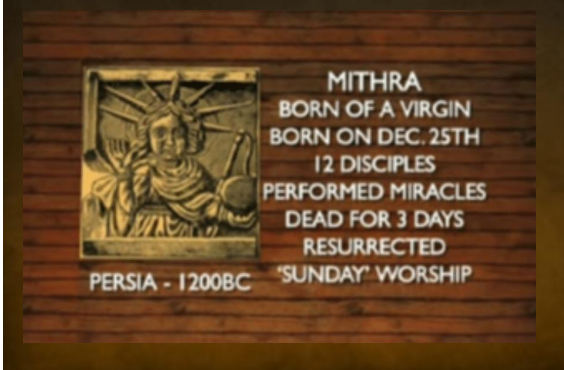
Attis According to Zeitgeist/Others



Attis According to History/Truth

- Many wide ranging accounts of Attis
- Not virgin born; woman Nana puts fruit in her lap that came from a tree started by Zeus' "seed" and supposedly has Attis from that
- Not crucified. One account has Attis being driven insane by his lover after which he castrates himself and he does 'bleeds to death' (but not by crucifixion) in the forest (remaining dead)
- No resurrection. Cybele [the great mother goddess] asks Zeus to preserve Attis and he does with the only signs being that his hair continues to grow and his little finger moves continuously. Only supposed resurrection stories of Attis come AD 150, long after the start of Christianity
- Secular scholars admit that Attis cult modified itself after Christianity and parroted Christian doctrines

Mithras According to Zeitgeist/Others



Mithras According to History/Truth

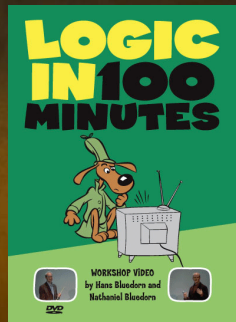
- Born out of a solid rock
- Emerged from rock carrying a knife and torch and wearing a Phrygian cap
- Battled first with the sun and then a primeval bull, thought to be the first act of creation. Mithras killed the bull, which then became the ground of life for the human race
- Very popular with the Roman military; military cult that excluded women
- Birth was celebrated on Dec. 25th along with Winter solstice
- Not mentioned as being a great teacher
- No mention of 12 disciples. Possible that the idea that Mithras had 12 disciples came from a mural in which Mithras is surrounded by twelve signs and personages of the Zodiac (two of whom are the moon and the sun), and even this imagery is POST Christian
- No bodily resurrection. We are told he completes his earthly mission then is taken to paradise in a chariot alive and well. Tertullian did write about Mithras believers re-enacting resurrection scenes, but he wrote about this occurring well after New Testament times.
- No evidence that Mithras was ever called "the Good Shepherd" or any other title attributed to Jesus
- Mithras worship flourished after Christianity and not before it

"It goes without saying that alleged parallels which are discovered by pursuing such methodology evaporate when they are confronted with the original texts. In a word, one must beware of what have been called, 'parallels made plausible by selective description.'
-Bruce Metzger
Historical & Literary Studies, 9



Commission of Logical Fallacies

1. Fallacy of the False Cause
2. Composite Fallacy
3. Terminological Fallacy



Was the Person of Jesus distorted into something much more by His disciples or others?

Initial Support for the NT's Truthfulness

- The many archaeological details confirming New Testament accounts.
- The historically confirmed references that run alongside the life of Christ.
- The early dating of the gospel accounts, during the lifetime of the eyewitnesses.
- The deep moral convictions of the authors and their commitment to truth.
- The accounts of the apostles going to their deaths for what they had seen.
- There is NO archeological evidence of mystery religions active in Palestine in the first century.
- The Jewish mind rejected syncretism outright. However, the later mystery religions embraced it with fervor. But, beginning in the 4th century, Christianity DID begin to adopt some aspects of the mystery cults (such as the December 25th date as the celebration for Christ's birth).
- The typology of Joseph and Jesus (used by the Zeitgeist film to supposedly debunk the actual existence of Christ) is very well known and accepted by conservative Christian scholars as a foreshadowing of the first coming of Jesus.

Evidence from Paul's Encounters

The people of that day were acquainted with the Greek and Roman gods:

"When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us." And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds."

(Acts 14: 11-13)

Evidence from Paul's Encounters

And yet when Paul encountered very knowledgeable philosophers, we find this reaction:

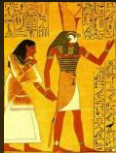
"He seems to be a proclaimer of **strange deities**,"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this **new teaching** is which you are proclaiming? For you are bringing some **strange things** to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean." (Acts 17:18-20)

The point: If dying and rising gods were aplenty in the first century, why, when the apostle Paul preached Jesus rising from the dead in Acts 17, did the Epicureans and Stoics not remark, "Ah, just like Horus and Mithras..."? The same would be true of Paul's discourse in Acts 26; Festus, a Roman (who would have known about the Roman military Mithras cult), said Paul was out of his mind for preaching the resurrection.

"The heart of Christianity is a myth which is also a fact. The old myth of the Dying God, without ceasing to be myth, comes down from the heaven of legend and imagination to the earth of history. It happens — at a particular date, in a particular place, followed by definable historical consequences. We pass from a Balder or an Osiris, dying nobody knows when or where, to a historical Person crucified (it is all in order) under Pontius Pilate. By becoming fact it does not cease to be myth; that is the miracle. . . We must not be nervous about 'parallels' and 'Pagan Christs'; they *ought* to be there — it would be a stumbling block if they weren't."
- C. S. Lewis, "When Myth Became Fact"



In other words, all the myths of mankind's primitive religions were expressions of a deep yearning — the deepest yearning — in mankind's consciousness, namely that the mysterious transcendent God would come into intimate contact with mankind, and do so in such a way that He would repair the damages made by mankind's sinfulness, and would grant to mankind a safety that would last forever. Christianity, rather than being one myth alongside many others, is thus the fulfillment of all previous mythological religions. It is a myth, like the others, but this time a myth that is also a fact.



Myth
Vs.
Fact



