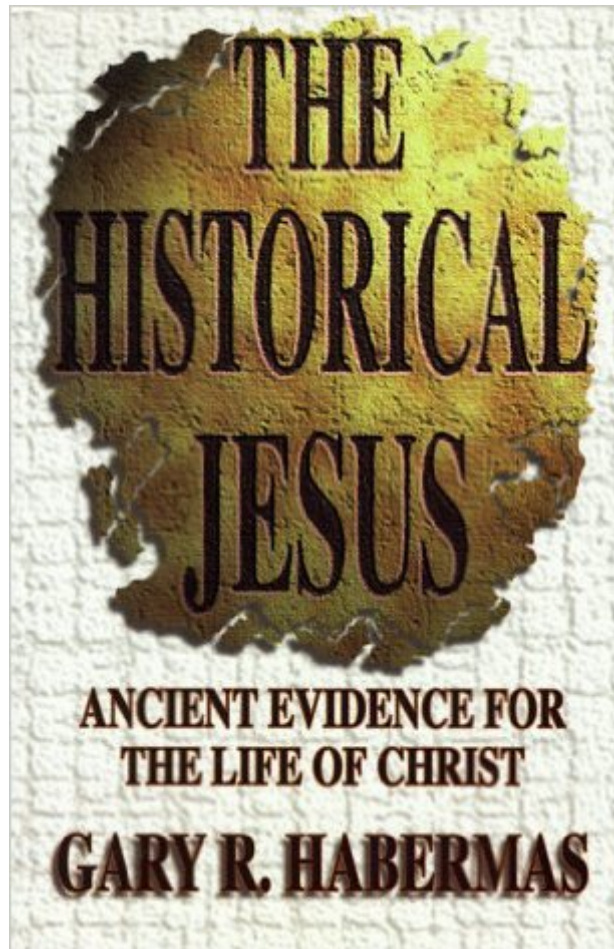


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The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence For The Life Of Christ



Synopsis

Habermas provides evidence that a man named Jesus really did live in Palestine in the first century, using the ordinary canons of historical research (artifactual evidence, inscriptional evidence, and literary evidence).

Book Information

Paperback: 298 pages

Publisher: College Press Publishing Company, Inc. (June 3, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0899007325

ISBN-13: 978-0899007328

Product Dimensions: 9 x 6 x 0.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (52 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Habermas shows the difference between honest literary/historical investigation & bias proclamations. He's not afraid to take on skeptics, meeting their hypotheses head-on. He not only details opposing viewpoints, but provides heavily footnoted sources to back up his argument that Jesus is not a myth "created" by man, but a real man whose "historical" life is "reported" with so much evidence that it's hard to ignore. In several other book reviews, I noticed skeptics (giving poor reviews) don't meet Habermas' facts head-on. Instead, they fall far short by countering his well-documented thesis with bold opinions they can't back up with evidence. For instance, one reviewer wrote "How can we evaluate the evidence for Jesus? Our best account is the Gospel of Mark, written thirty years after Jesus died. ... Once Christians started mourning Jesus, historians recorded the movement. Does that mean Jesus was real? Okay, but it doesn't mean the Resurrection was real, or that Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. All of these mythical touches were invented after Jesus died, so he could "predict" events that happened between the time he died and the time the Gospels were composed. All of this leads us to the conclusion that there is no real evidence whether Jesus actually lived or not. The story is what sold,

and the story isn't true."What he fails to see is his own account contradicts his claim, and proves false itself. According to his own words, Mark, our "best account" (of Jesus' life) was written "30 years after Jesus died;" thus putting Mark written c.60-63AD, since scholars (even skeptics) agree Jesus' death was around 30-33AD. The reviewer says that doesn't prove Jesus was able to make predictions, which he claims were "mythical touches" invented after Jesus died and prior to the written Gospels. But he fails to see the mathematically logical problem with his thesis; how is it that Jesus' prediction of the Temple destruction is recorded in MARK's Gospel, which was written years before the predicted event? MARK 13:2 "And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down." Even the reviewer admits the Temple was destroyed in 70AD, a known historical fact not seriously challenged by anyone, but he fails to explain why it was recorded as prophesied by Jesus in Mark, which he admits is our "best source" written in 60-63AD, at least 7 years beforehand!!! Sorry--even reviewers must back up their claims with evidence! This IS what Habermas does well. Don't just take bold statements as fact; compare it with the evidence and see if it can still stand up to the beating. Habermas confronts opposing hypotheses. He doesn't shy away from stating when the evidence is weak nor when it is overwhelmingly strong. Those who read Habermas' book with an open mind, will see and appreciate the honest research that went into this book, and maybe even come to see the historical truthfulness of Jesus. Don't let negative/skeptical reviews deter you; Read the book for yourself and decide. Personally, I've added Habermas' book to my library with other great apologetic books, which I highly recommend: Jesus, The Great Debate by Grant Jeffrey, Letters From a Skeptic by Dr Gregory Boyd, and The Case For Christ by Lee Strobel.

Habermas provides evidence that a man named Jesus really did live in Palestine in the first century, using the ordinary canons of historical research (artifactual evidence, inscriptional evidence, and literary evidence). Because Habermas concludes that Jesus was a real person in history, many atheists will be offended by this book (as evidenced by the negative reviews). However, the evidence that Jesus lived is actually better than the evidence that Mark Antony or Cleopatra lived. In one long negative review of this book, the reviewer embraced many statements by skeptics and critics exercising much less critical discernment than he used in evaluating the book. Also, the reviewer made statements like "it is virtually universal" when the statement being made actually is not. Do not be put off by negative reviews. Read this book and make up your mind for yourself. Another book on the same topic is Josh McDowell, "He Walked Among Us." Try stacking up the evidence these two books provide against, say, whether Mark Antony ever really existed. (E.g.,

were the ancient people that wrote about Mark Antony's life either eyewitnesses of Mark Antony, or did they at least have access to people who were eyewitnesses? This kind of corroboration in ancient history is rare indeed, but that is precisely the kind of corroboration one finds in both the Gospels and Paul). Of course, there will never be a debate about Mark Antony because there isn't as much at stake. Keep this in mind when you read negative reviews. Neither negative reviews nor positive ones are completely objective, a fact that is clearly evident in both types of reviews for this book.

To fully understand this book and the reviews posted here one must comprehend that in modern day world there are three distinct groups that research the bible they can be broken down as follows¹ The Christians (Those people who believe that the bible is the word of god of which Gary Habermas would fall under)² The Liberal Scholars (This group is made up of people who are trying to show that the bible is completely wrong and man made and in some cases that Jesus was not a historical figure.)³ The Secular Historians (The largest of the three groups whose goal seems to be historical accuracy without commenting on the theistic aspect, they virtually unanimously agree that Jesus Christ did exist and probably preformed miracles although they label them as magic and was considered to be either the son of god or a great prophet.) What is surprising about this book is that while it is written by a Christian to help forward his Christian beliefs it is quite obvious that the author has stuck mostly to the work of the Secular Historians. In some cases he has erred on the liberal side of the secular historians sometimes not presenting the cases as strongly as one would think he could. This raises an interesting point in reviewing this book. While I would think that he would rely solely on Christian sources he does not, instead he proves his point in a highly convincing way using Secular sources. I applaud the author and I hope that more of the naysayers and negative reviewers could be so truthful. It would be interesting to see if a liberal scholar could uphold their position using only secular sources. I doubt it, but I don't think they would even try. Anyhow back to this book, I found it fair, historically accurate, slightly dated, but then again any book dealing with history is dated as soon as it is written and best of all enjoyable for those who are non-Christians but enjoy history.

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