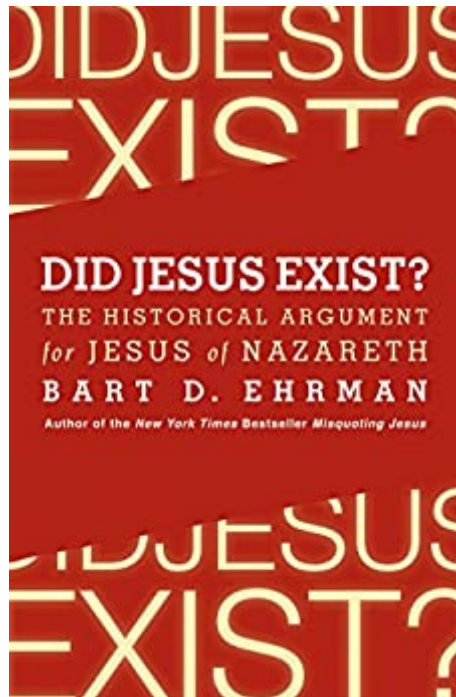




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Did Jesus Exist?: The Historical Argument For Jesus Of Nazareth



Synopsis

In *Did Jesus Exist?* historian and Bible expert Bart Ehrman confronts the question, "Did Jesus exist at all?" Ehrman vigorously defends the historical Jesus, identifies the most historically reliable sources for best understanding Jesus's mission and message, and offers a compelling portrait of the person at the heart of the Christian tradition. Known as a master explainer with deep knowledge of the field, Bart Ehrman methodically demolishes both the scholarly and popular "mythicist" arguments against the existence of Jesus. Marshaling evidence from within the Bible and the wider historical record of the ancient world, Ehrman tackles the key issues that surround the mythologies associated with Jesus and the early Christian movement. In *Did Jesus Exist?: The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth*, Ehrman establishes the criterion for any genuine historical investigation and provides a robust defense of the methods required to discover the Jesus of history.

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Customer Reviews

Well written with excellent documentation

I have read a number of Ehrman's books about Christianity. He will not commit to a belief in Christianity, which can be frustrating. But he is up front about his approach, he is a historian. In fact, he is a brilliant historian. In this book, he identifies those who are claiming that Jesus did not exist, he sorts out the arguments and then addresses each one. He systematically analyzes the arguments, shows their weakness and dismantles them. He does a beautiful job.

Very interesting

Bart Ehrman is probably best known for his work debunking the reliability of the New Testament and arguing the case that there were a variety of views among earlier Christians, only one of which survived to become the orthodox tradition. Occasionally, though, he switches gears to take on authors who have proposed what Ehrman believes are far-fetched revisionist accounts of early Christianity. Some years ago, he wrote an interesting rebuttal to Dan Brown's claims in "The Da Vinci Code" — Truth and Fiction in The Da Vinci Code: A Historian Reveals What We Really Know about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Constantine. In "Did Jesus Exist?" Ehrman takes on the recent series of popular books that argue that Jesus, in fact, did not exist and was made up by early Christian writers. I am only a casual reader of New Testament scholarship, but Ehrman's arguments seem entirely convincing to me. We have multiple early accounts of various aspects of Jesus' life that are preserved in the New Testament, most of which was, of course, written decades after Jesus' death. The idea that early Christian writers, who were widely separated geographically somehow conspired to concoct the myth of Jesus seems implausible. I think it is telling that, according to Ehrman, no scholar of the New Testament at a college or university anywhere in the world doubts Jesus' existence. As with Ehrman's other books, this one is a quick and easy read. Ehrman has the facility of taking the technical scholarship on the New Testament and making it intelligible and interesting to the average reader. I will say, though, that this book is a bit sloppy. Like most books these days, it appears not to have been closely edited. There are many avoidable repetitions, there are grammatical slips here and there, and some instances of non-standard word usage. Perhaps most surprisingly, although the book has endnotes and a bibliography, it lacks an index. The lack of an index is often a tell-tale sign of a book that is rushed into print because the index is usually the last thing prepared before a book goes to press. Not having an index reduces the usefulness of this book as a reference. Overall, though, if you are interested in the subject

matter, you will find this book to be a worthwhile read.

Interesting read.

Another very readable book by the New Testament scholar Bart Ehrman - this time usefully summarising the evidence for the historical Jesus. I think it's based on his lectures to his students, but it is absolutely none the worse for that. Ever since Schweitzer, scholars have attempted to answer the question about the man Jesus - who he was, what he believed, what he taught. Much of that territory - over a century of scholarship - is summarised here. Ehrman is scrupulous with his sources, and leads the reader through the detail: this text compared with that; how this word may have been added by... weighing the arguments. And his conclusions: yes, almost certainly Jesus existed. He was born in Nazareth; he died; he had a mother, brothers and sisters; he lived in Galilee; he was at some time a follower of the (more famous) John the Baptizer, and he was killed by crucifixion. And that is about it. The rest is myth and conjecture. A good place to start for folks ready to plunge into the publications of the Jesus Seminar - and essential reading for everyone who goes to church on Sunday.

A enjoyable read full of great and easy going scholarship by one of the modern masters of New Testament scholarship, Bart D. Ehrman. Ehrman creates an excellent, easy to read and engaging book tackling one of the modern era's biggest questions, "Did Jesus exist?" While not exhaustive, Ehrman tackles some of the common place arguments people face when being questioned on the historicity of Jesus, as well as some of the more engaging elements of the argument from well trained academics in the field, such as Robert M. Price and Thomas L. Thompson. Towards the end, the subject matter did get rather dry, but I think that is because Ehrman so quickly dismantled the arguments again "mythism" that there really wasn't much left to say. Overall, this book would be excellent for people who are curious to know, how scholars know there was a Jesus.

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