

Jesus Before Christianity

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RICHARDSON SANFORD

A Documented Biography of Jesus Before Christianity

HarperCollins

That's now, but what about then? There is much diversity in Christianity today in terms of what constitutes necessary core beliefs, but what can we know about the earliest Christianity? Until the major councils began in the fourth century, were all who claimed to be Christian considered part of the church, or was there more to it than just claiming a name? Is there evidence for how the church understood core and necessary beliefs prior to Constantine's arrival in history and the Council of Nicea in AD 325? This book examines such questions. Using only those materials that are accepted by most scholars on the subject, whether they are Christian or not, and focusing on the period from AD 30-250, a picture emerges showing what Christians held as a core belief as well as how flexible they were on this belief. Only after identifying where the church stood in this period can we begin to understand whether others such as Ebionites, Docetists, and Marcionites would have been accepted as Christian. A case is made based on writings from the church, the Nag Hammadi, and a completely secular tool from the twentieth century to find the conclusion to this question.

Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation Zondervan

A historical study of Jesus and the beginnings and later history of the movement he left behind

The Truth about Jesus Orbis Books

The bestselling author of *Misquoting Jesus*, one of the most renowned and controversial Bible scholars in the world today examines oral tradition and its role in shaping the stories about Jesus we encounter in the New Testament—and ultimately in our understanding of Christianity. Throughout much of human history, our most important stories were passed down orally—including the stories about Jesus before they became written down in the Gospels. In this fascinating and deeply researched work, leading Bible scholar Bart D. Ehrman investigates the role oral history has played in the New Testament—how the telling of these stories not only spread Jesus' message but helped shape it. A master explainer of Christian history, texts, and traditions, Ehrman draws on a range of disciplines, including psychology and anthropology, to examine the role of memory in the creation of the Gospels. Explaining how oral tradition evolves based on the latest scientific research, he demonstrates how the act of telling and retelling impacts the story, the storyteller, and the listener—crucial insights that challenge our typical historical understanding of the silent period between when Jesus lived and died and when his stories began to be written down. As he did in his previous books on religious scholarship, debates on New Testament authorship, and the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, Ehrman combines his deep knowledge and meticulous scholarship in a compelling and eye-opening narrative that will change the way we read and think

about these sacred texts.

Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity Random House

With his latest book, *The Holy Spirit before Christianity*, John R. Levison again changes the face and foundation of Christian belief in the Holy Spirit. The categories Christians have used, the boundaries they have created, the proprietary claims they have made—all of these evaporate, now that Levison has looked afresh at Scripture. In a study that is both poignant and provocative, Levison takes readers back five hundred years before Jesus, where he discovers history's first grasp of the Holy Spirit as a personal agent. The prophet Haggai and the author of Isaiah 56-66, in their search for ways to grapple with the tragic events of exile and to articulate hope for the future, took up old exodus traditions of divine agents—pillars of fire, an angel, God's own presence—and fused them with belief in God's Spirit. Since it was the Spirit of God who led Israel up from Egypt and formed them into a holy nation, now, the prophets assured their hearers, the Spirit of God would lead and renew those returning from exile. Taking this point of origin as our guide, Christian pneumatology—belief in the Holy Spirit—is less about an exclusively Christian experience or doctrine and more about the presence of God in the grand scheme of Israel's history, in which Christianity is ancient Israel's heir. This explosive observation traces the essence of Christian pneumatology deep into the heart of the Hebrew Scriptures. The implications are fierce: the priority of Israelite tradition at the headwaters of pneumatology means that Christians can no longer hold stubbornly to the Holy Spirit as an exclusively Christian belief. But the implications are hopeful as well, offering Christians a richer history, a renewed vocabulary, a shared path with Judaism, and the promise of a more expansive and authentic experience of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Before Christianity Baker Academic

In *Christianity Before Christ*, comparative religion scholar John G Jackson explores ancient traditions from many societies, asserting that Christianity is the recasting of beliefs which are older and pervasive through many cultures.

After Jesus Before Christianity Echo Point Books & Media, LLC

Even the most orthodox Christian scholars admit that Jesus' exact birth date is unknown. Why then is His birthday observed between late December and early January around the world? Read "Christmas Before Christianity," the riveting book by award-winning Christian author, historian, and Bible authority Colonel Lochlainn Seabrook and find out!

The Case for Christ Orbis Books

Khrisna of India. Thammuz of Syria. Esus of the Celtic Druids. Mithra of Persia. Quexalcoati of Mexico. All were crucified gods, and all met their fates hundreds of years before Jesus appeared on the scene. In this foundational work of modern atheism, American spiritualist KERSEY GRAVES (1813-1883) breaks the Christ myth down into its component parts and ably demonstrates how the story of Jesus has its roots in the depths of antiquity. Here you'll read about the surprising prevalence throughout global folklore of: . the miraculous and immaculate conception of the gods . stars that point out the time and place of

a savior's birth . angels, shepherds, and magi visiting an infant savior . the 25th of December as the universal birth date of gods . saviors who descend into Hell . and much more. This is essential reading for students of comparative mythology and modern freethinkers. Also available from Cosimo: Graves's *The Biography of Satan and The Bible of Bible*.

Cold-Case Christianity Simon and Schuster

Can we know if Jesus actually lived? Have Jesus's followers been a force for good or evil in history? A respected journalist set out to find the answers--not from opinion but from artifacts. The evidence led him to an unexpected conclusion: Jesus really existed and launched the greatest movement for social good in human history. A first-of-its-kind book for a new generation, *Jesus Skeptic* takes nothing for granted as it explores whether Jesus actually lived and how his story has changed our world. You'll - learn what heroes like Martin Luther King Jr. and Harriet Tubman believed about Jesus - discover how Jesus inspired women's rights, education rights, and modern hospitals - see visual proofs of Jesus's impact, never before compiled in one place - be inspired to continue Jesus's fight for human rights, justice, and progress *Jesus Skeptic* unveils convincing physical evidence that will enlighten seekers, skeptics, and longtime Christians alike. In a generation that wants to make the world a better place, we can discover what humanity's greatest champions had in common: a Christian faith.

Subversive Jesus Wyatt North Publishing, LLC

Over half of Americans believe in a literal heaven, in a literal hell. Most people who hold these beliefs are Christian and assume they are the age-old teachings of the Bible. Ehrman shows that eternal rewards and punishments are found nowhere in the Old Testament, and are not what Jesus or his disciples taught. He recounts the long history of the afterlife, ranging from The Epic of Gilgamesh up to the writings of Augustine, focusing especially on the teachings of Jesus and his early followers. Ehrman shows that competing views were intimately connected with the social, cultural, and historical worlds out of which they emerged. -- adapted from jacket

Zealot Canongate U.S.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER The "paradigm-influencing" book (*Christianity Today*) that is fundamentally transforming our understanding of white evangelicalism in America. *Jesus and John Wayne* is a sweeping, revisionist history of the last seventy-five years of white evangelicalism, revealing how evangelicals have worked to replace the Jesus of the Gospels with an idol of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism—or in the words of one modern chaplain, with "a spiritual badass." As acclaimed scholar Kristin Du Mez explains, the key to understanding this transformation is to recognize the centrality of popular culture in contemporary American evangelicalism. Many of today's evangelicals might not be theologically astute, but they know their VeggieTales, they've read John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart*, and they learned about purity before they learned about sex—and they have a silver ring to prove it. Evangelical books, films, music, clothing, and merchandise shape the beliefs of millions. And evangelical culture is teeming with muscular heroes—mythical warriors and rugged soldiers, men like Oliver North, Ronald Reagan, Mel Gibson, and the Duck Dynasty clan, who assert white masculine power in defense of "Christian America." Chief among these evangelical legends is John Wayne, an icon of a lost time when men were uncowed by political correctness, unafraid to tell it like it was, and did what needed to be done. Challenging the commonly held assumption that the "moral majority" backed Donald Trump in 2016 and 2020 for purely pragmatic reasons, Du Mez reveals that Trump in fact represented the fulfillment, rather than the betrayal, of white

evangelicals' most deeply held values: patriarchy, authoritarian rule, aggressive foreign policy, fear of Islam, ambivalence toward #MeToo, and opposition to Black Lives Matter and the LGBTQ community. A much-needed reexamination of perhaps the most influential subculture in this country, *Jesus and John Wayne* shows that, far from adhering to biblical principles, modern white evangelicals have remade their faith, with enduring consequences for all Americans.

Jesus Skeptic Fortress Press

Beginning as a marginal group in Galilee, the movement initiated by Jesus of Nazareth became a world religion within 100 years. Why, among various religious movements, did Christianity succeed? This major work by internationally renowned scholar Udo Schnelle traces the historical, cultural, and theological influences and developments of the early years of the Christian movement. It shows how Christianity provided an intellectual framework, a literature, and socialization among converts that led to its enduring influence. Senior New Testament scholar James Thompson offers a clear, fluent English translation of the successful German edition.

How Jesus Became God iUniverse

The author of *The Jesus Dynasty* draws on St. Paul's letters and other early sources to reveal the apostles' sharply competing ideas about the significance of Jesus and His teachings while controversially demonstrating how St. Paul independently shaped Christianity as it is known today. 75,000 first printing.

Republican Jesus Orbis Books

Paul Barnett not only places the New Testament within the world of caesars and Herods, proconsuls and Pharisees, Sadducee and revolutionaries, but argues that the mainspring and driving force of early Christian history is the historical Jesus.

Revelation Wipf and Stock Publishers

From the author of the acclaimed historical novel, *The Matthias Scroll*, comes this nonfiction advance in Gospel interpretation. As fresh translations and undeniable inference open the Christianizing shells of lore and legend, a complete biography of Jesus emerges. For the first time, this penetrating study brings us together with the one so many have been seeking to know and appreciate as a human being. Never considered possible, Epstein's critical analysis crosses seemingly insurmountable linguistic hurdles, solving millenia-old riddles about the historical Jesus. "With his arrest foreshadowed by formerly unknown circumstance," Epstein suggests, "most serious New Testament scholars are likely to be amazed by the facts surrounding his capture, crucifixion, and interment." Praise from eminent scholar and author Shaul Magid: "Delightful and provocative! Epstein has constructed a novel portrait of Jesus' life based on New Testament passages juxtaposed to the Judaism of his time. Applying his own method of interpretation, the author challenges the Gospel account, recovering biographical dimensions of a pre-Christian, humanized Jesus. Joining the tradition of 'the search for the historical Jesus,' what results is a readable, provocative thesis." Shaul Magid The Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Chair Professor of Jewish and Religious Studies Indiana University *The Homebrewed Christianity Guide to Jesus* Simon and Schuster Nolan's portrait introduces readers to Jesus as He was before He became enshrined in doctrine, dogma, and ritual, a man deeply involved with the real problems of His time, which are the real problems of our time as well. In a new preface, Nolan reflects on recent work in Christology and how a book written in South Africa in 1976 still has a message for people today.

The Case for Jesus Yale University Press

When world-class biblical scholar Bart Ehrman first began to study the texts of the Bible in their original languages he was startled to discover the multitude of mistakes and intentional

alterations that had been made by earlier translators. In *Misquoting Jesus*, Ehrman tells the story behind the mistakes and changes that ancient scribes made to the New Testament and shows the great impact they had upon the Bible we use today. He frames his account with personal reflections on how his study of the Greek manuscripts made him abandon his once ultraconservative views of the Bible. Since the advent of the printing press and the accurate reproduction of texts, most people have assumed that when they read the New Testament they are reading an exact copy of Jesus's words or Saint Paul's writings. And yet, for almost fifteen hundred years these manuscripts were hand copied by scribes who were deeply influenced by the cultural, theological, and political disputes of their day. Both mistakes and intentional changes abound in the surviving manuscripts, making the original words difficult to reconstruct. For the first time, Ehrman reveals where and why these changes were made and how scholars go about reconstructing the original words of the New Testament as closely as possible. Ehrman makes the provocative case that many of our cherished biblical stories and widely held beliefs concerning the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity, and the divine origins of the Bible itself stem from both intentional and accidental alterations by scribes -- alterations that dramatically affected all subsequent versions of the Bible.

The First One Hundred Years of Christianity Cosimo Classics

A compelling account of Christianity's Jewish beginnings, from one of the world's leading scholars of ancient religion How did a group of charismatic, apocalyptic Jewish missionaries, working to prepare their world for the impending realization of God's promises to Israel, end up inaugurating a movement that would grow into the gentile church? Committed to Jesus's prophecy—"The Kingdom of God is at hand!"—they were, in their own eyes, history's last generation. But in history's eyes, they became the first Christians. In this electrifying social and intellectual history, Paula Fredriksen answers this question by reconstructing the life of the earliest Jerusalem community. As her account arcs from this group's hopeful celebration of Passover with Jesus, through their bitter controversies that fragmented the movement's midcentury missions, to the city's fiery end in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, she brings this vibrant apostolic community to life. Fredriksen offers a vivid portrait both of this temple-centered messianic movement and of the bedrock convictions that animated and sustained it.

Christianity Before Christ Univ of California Press

The complete guide to debunking right-wing misinterpretations of the Bible—from economics and immigration to gender and sexuality. Jesus loves borders, guns, unborn babies, and economic prosperity and hates homosexuality, taxes, welfare,

and universal healthcare—or so say many Republican politicians, pundits, and preachers. Through outrageous misreadings of the New Testament gospels that started almost a century ago, conservative influencers have conjured a version of Jesus that speaks to their fears, desires, and resentments. In *Republican Jesus*, Tony Keddie explains not only where this right-wing Christ came from and what he stands for but also why this version of Jesus is a fraud. By restoring Republicans' cherry-picked gospel texts to their original literary and historical contexts, Keddie dismantles the biblical basis for Republican positions on hot-button issues like Big Government, taxation, abortion, immigration, and climate change. At the same time, he introduces readers to an ancient Jesus whose life experiences and ethics were totally unlike those of modern Americans, conservatives and liberals alike.

The Church Before Christianity InterVarsity Press

The final book of the Bible, Revelation prophesies the ultimate judgement of mankind in a series of allegorical visions, grisly images and numerological predictions. According to these, empires will fall, the "Beast" will be destroyed and Christ will rule a new Jerusalem. With an introduction by Will Self.

What Did Jesus Look Like? HarperCollins

When Jesus left the most exclusive gated community in the universe to come live with the people he loved and gave his life for, he turned everything we know and believe about life on its head. Jesus said that he came to bring good news to the poor, but most Western Christians remain disconnected and isolated from the poor and their contexts of injustice. Even our churches echo society's pressure to isolate ourselves from the margins (e.g. by moving to a better suburb) and instead teach us how to be "nice people" who worship a "nice Jesus" and don't disrupt the status quo. Convinced that Jesus places love for the poor and the pursuit of justice central, Craig Greenfield has sought to follow in Christ's footsteps by living among people at the edges of society for the last fourteen years. His quest to follow this Subversive Jesus has taken Craig and his young family from the slums of Asia to inner city Canada and back again. This is the story of how Jesus led them to the margins: initiating the Pirates of Justice flash mobs, sharing their home with detoxing crackheads, welcoming homeless panhandlers and prostitutes to the dinner table, and ultimately sparking a movement to reach the world's most vulnerable children. This book is a strong and potentially controversial critique of the status quo too often found in our churches, but it offers an inspirational and hopeful vision of another way. While readers may not relocate to a slum, they will certainly come to view their lives and ministry through a fresh lens—reconsidering how they are uniquely called by Jesus to subversively love the poor and break down systems of injustice in their sphere of influence.