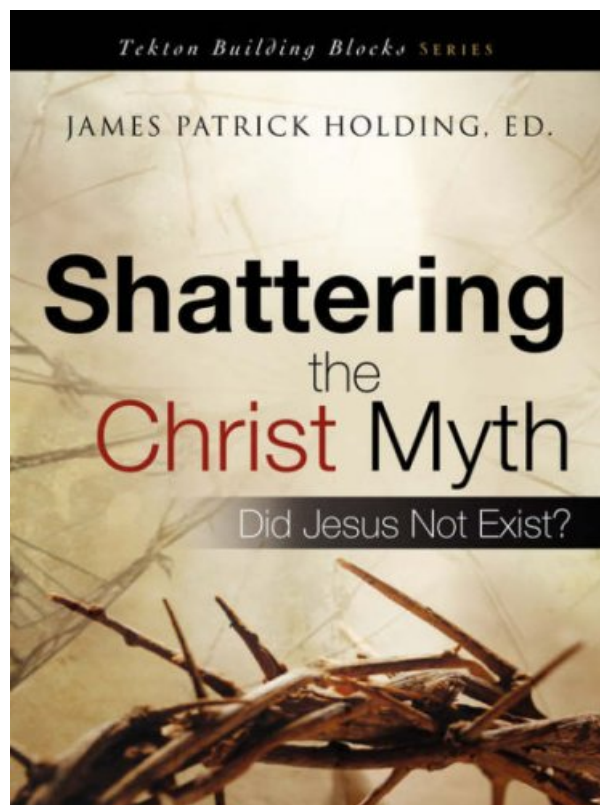
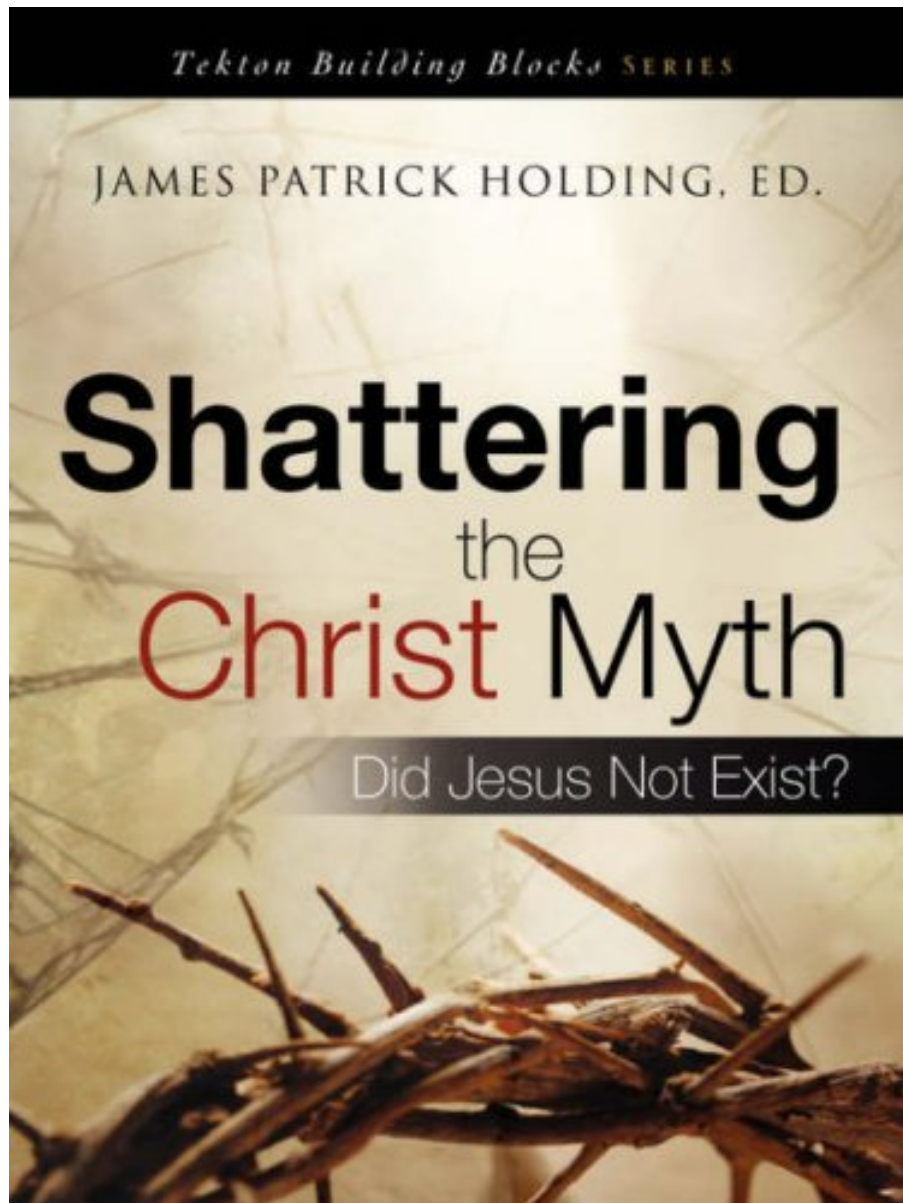


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How To Get Rid of Jesus: Prove He Didn't Exist! A popular question posed by Christians today asks, "WWJD?" - which stands for, "What Would Jesus Do?" For more and more Skeptics of Christianity, however, the answer to this question is, "JDNE" - which stands for, "Jesus did not exist!" In this volume, edited by prominent Internet apologist James Patrick Holding, a team of Christian authors provide a series of essays giving detailed answers to those who argue for the "Christ myth." Though rejected by mainstream scholars, this theory continues to grow in popularity among popular writers and Internet antagonists. The need for Christians to be ready to give an answer to it will only become more urgent. "Here's a clear and compelling rebuttal to fallacious claims that keep resurfacing in books and on the Internet. It's well-researched, expertly presented, and ultimately convincing." - Lee Strobel, author, The Case for the Real Jesus

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Not a scholarly work by far, but debunks the internet crackpots.

By F. Maddalena

I have read some of the previous reviews (amd replies) and much, maybe too much has already been said and debated.

First I want to clarify something.

There are three types of works in science (using in a very a broad meaning here) and especially regarding the figure of Jesus:

1- The scholarly work. This usually comes out in forms of articles in peer-reviewed journals that are mostly unavailable to the general public otherwise it comes in the form of books that target the specialist in the area

or in the form of conference proceedings.

2- The amateurish work. This can be good at times, but there is usually a big difference in depth and skill. Most of these works are self-published rubbish.

Works from people Acharya S, Sitchin, Richard Carrier, Doherty, Richard Dawkins and other are the worst kind of this category regarding the historicity of Jesus. They are text written by amateurs or people mostly ignorant of the field. They are both amateurs and make outrageous claims only to fail to give good arguments for them and, more often than not, full of gross mistakes.

True scholars largely ignore such works, since they are comparable to people who publish why Einstein is wrong without even knowing what a metric tensor is.

Usually, if a scholar bothers to pay attention to them, they are easily refuted by them.

3- Pop-books by scholars to the general public. These can be a mixed bag.

This arises sometimes when the scholars make claims that half true but presenting them as fully true, while the general public is none the wiser.

Some authors are more honest than other when writing to the general public.

That occurs in the physical sciences as well.

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That out of the way let's turn to the author.

Now J.P. Holding book falls into category 2: Holding is an "Amateur", since he is not a biblical scholar nor does he claim or pretend to be (and this already differentiates him from the people I mentioned already in category 2 above!).

He states, at least in his website that he has a degree in library science and that he is good at looking up information. That appears to be true.

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What of the book itself?

The book is good for the aim it sets!!!

The aim of the book is not to be a scholarly work (and it cannot be considered as such) but an apologetic work against the worst of group #2 above.

It's not a chance I dropped a few names there.

These names represent a fraction of people one might call 'The internet crackpots of biblical scholarship' (ICBS for short).

They continue to support a form of 'Christ Myth Theory' which is not even considered seriously by most scholars anymore. They either copy old and low quality material from the XIX century (e.g. Baur) or make up their own version which is often even of lower quality.

Indeed their work is usually found in websites an few books they squeeze out and mostly is void of any serious and peer-reviewed work.

Now you will say: But J.P. Holding is in the same boat!

True, but not quite. I think one of Holding's qualities is that he knows how to look up facts and information. The book is indeed a collection of information and criticism on the ICBS works that exposes their flaws.

This is the strength of the book! The ICBS crowd's work can be in principle be debunked by most people who can read and is willing to do a little research. The problem is that most people lack the will or the time to do so.

Now J.P. Holding's work itself is not free of some critical points. As I said he's not a biblical scholar and perhaps, at times, he's too eager to jump to his own conclusions, although such faults are to be found in professional biblical scholars as well sometimes (especially those who write in category #3 mentioned above)

Holdin presents a neat book with many information that will debunk the ICBS' shabby works.

The info Holding presents is clear, not technical and can be checked with anyone with a valid library card.

Although I think Holding does distinguish himself, if you expect a book that will introduce you seriously in the field of biblical scholarship you might be disappointed.

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#### IN CONCLUSION:

J. P. Holding's book is a neat resource to debunk the shabby work and crackpot theories that go around the internet and the libraries these days.

Yet, if someone TRULY desires to understand the `Historical Jesus' debate at an advanced level, then J.P. Holding's book is not for you.

In that case you need to turn to serious scholarly literature and do some research on your own.

So I think this book is excellent as a rebuttal of the crazier theories against Jesus and Christianity, but one must keep in mind it is not a scholarly book nor does it delve deeply into the ongoing Historical Jesus debate.

18 of 26 people found the following review helpful.

An amateur, but complete dismantling of a tired conspiracy theory

By Kurgan

This is a readable, and up-to-date debunking of a conspiracy theory that still has many followers today, especially on the internet. While some critics have pointed out that the author himself is not a biblical scholar (Holding holds a degree in library science, which essentially means he's good at looking things up), most of his opponents have no better credentials either. Likewise, the objections that Holding raises against this theory are sound, and his sources are legitimate. Perhaps it will help first time readers to gain a little bit of history:

The idea that Jesus of Nazareth, the Jewish preacher called Christ and worshiped by 2 billion Christians today, was actually a fictional character, dreamt up long ago by purveyors of Myth, or even copied from ancient pagan gods, was, believe it or not, once a popular theory amongst enthusiastic amateur writers. Fueled by new discoveries from Egypt, and a post-Enlightenment hubris, these writers set out to prove what they already believed... that all the real knowledge of the world came from one ancient source in the East. Some wished to blend neo-occult practices, secret societies and new religious movements together with a

mythical link to the past. Some wished to provide a justification for rejection of state Churches (especially those of the old order in Europe where the Catholic Church had lost so much ground). Negatively, others would take up their work and declare that all religions were false, coming from the same initial font of superstition. The 19th century was a very productive period for works espousing Christ Mythicism. What the Mythers had done often was to take the idea espoused by anti-Catholics and ethnocentrists in denouncing the ritual-based religions (such as Catholicism) as superstition borrowed from long-dead pagan cults one step further and apply it to Christianity as a whole. What happens to a religion if its entire foundation is a big hoax? Perhaps there was even some projection going on, as the secret societies gained a following among the elite by claiming ancient roots to the Templars or Atlantis and ancient Egypt, and traditional Christianity was marginalized as being an outdated and legendary religion out of touch with empirical fact and history.

As time has gone on, the "Christ Mythers" have dwindled in number and in popularity, thanks to discovery after discovery from the ancient context of the Jesus and the early Christian movement. Greater understanding of not only the Greek language and 2nd Temple Judaism, but greater understanding of the Greco-Roman and Egyptian religions and mystery cults challenging and undermining both the claims to mythicism and the entire notion of a syncretic mono myth being at the root of all religion. Finally, atheism has emerged as an intellectual movement in its own right, that is not dependent upon conspiracy theories to keep itself afloat.

Thanks to the internet however, a whole new generation of people have been introduced to these theories by an enthusiastic set of writers and filmmakers who have revived and repackaged the theories. A multitude of internet sites have proliferated espousing the theory that Jesus was a hoax, invented for some nefarious purpose, or else the inevitable result of "primitive peasants" misreading texts of a mystical nature intended for only higher minds to interpret symbolically. Books, mostly self published by one "Acharya S" (DM Murdoch) which claim that Christianity started out as a Sun god religion, having been inspired by ancient astrological god cults, have gained a cult following online, even inspiring "documentary" conspiracy films like "Zeitgeist: the Movie" (see my review elsewhere on Amazon) and Brian Flemming's "The God Who Wasn't There." What many don't realize is how badly out of date and flimsy is the data that these works are based upon, never mind the flat out deceptive way they are marketed. The appeal of such theories of course is obvious.

Long dismissed by the scholarly academic community, few have endeavored to address the claims of these conspiracy theorists point blank. Many academics consider addressing such a question beneath them (a few exceptions exist, such as Bart D. Ehrman, himself a non-theist).

JP Holding has written a number of apologetic books, and much criticism of him by anti-Christians exists on the web. Much of it surrounds his often sarcastic, sometimes abrasive tone on the web regarding his opponents (who, it should be known, are not often kind to him either). This book however, raises the tone of the discussion and is quite professional in its examination of the evidence, and readable in its format. Far from taking cheap shots at his opponents, the author provides adequate sources that can be checked, and for the most part deals very fairly with the evidence, when it would be easy for him to resort to heavy handed apologetics. Holding is not the only writer featured in this work, but his writing frames the conversation. By the end you'll feel as if you've gone on a journey exploring the issue, rather than being beaten over the head with a sermon.

My only complaint is the large format of the book (a magazine sized soft cover), which has the appearance of a published dissertation, rather than a traditional text. Overall, the author addresses each of the major Jesus Myth sources on the web, including various popular films that have come out espousing similar claims, and gets to the heart of these claims from and "ancient" Christ Mythers. While Holding is clearly a



confessional Christian evangelical, he nevertheless keeps his own apologetic to a minimum when addressing the issues of fact and history. Every reader should check out the evidence for themselves, but I can't imagine that any honest person, having done so, would not find themselves siding with history rather than conspiracy on this issue.

47 of 69 people found the following review helpful.

Shattering the Internet Mythicists

By PhilVaz

Having been aware of this so-called "debate" on the Internet (please note: it is entirely an "online debate" not one advanced by serious NT or historical Jesus scholars) since the mid 1990s, I am glad that J.P. Holding has finally transcribed and edited some of his impressive "Tektonics" online articles for an entire book on "Shattering the Christ Myth." He and his amateur scholar contributors have pulled together an excellent set of articles and chapters debunking both the "myth" hypothesis and the "copycat" or "pagan parallel" thesis presented by many an anti-Christian conspiracy buff and uninformed skeptic of historical Christianity.

Chapters include an introduction on the history and origin of the "Christ myth" claims dating from the early 1800s; detailed defenses of the standard non-biblical references to Jesus from the Jewish historian Josephus (his two passages), the Roman historian Tacitus, Lucian, Pliny the Younger, and Papias; responses to the various "silences" argued by "mythicists" from Remsburg to G.A. Wells to Earl Doherty; analysis of the supposed "pagan Christs" from Mithra to Krishna to Horus to Dionysos; reviews and refutations exposing the abysmal scholarship and poor arguments of recent "Christ myth" movies "The God Who Wasn't There" and "Zeitgeist"; and additional material on the city of Nazareth, the academic and Internet mythicists, and more.

This book shows there is really nothing at all to the "mythicist" claims: they are groundless historically, poorly argued based on "silence" and refuted by numerous reliable witnesses to Jesus, and that includes the canonical Gospels and the earliest writings of St. Paul. The real debate among scholars is not whether there was a historical Jesus who was crucified under Pontius Pilate around 30 AD, but on Christ's claims to divinity and being the unique Son of God, the miracles of the Gospels as signs of that divinity, and especially the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ -- i.e. the whole "Jesus of history" vs. "Christ of faith" debate among conservative evangelical and more "liberal" scholarship.

Jeffery Jay Lowder of Internet Infidels: "There is simply nothing intrinsically improbable about a historical Jesus; the New Testament alone (or at least portions of it) are reliable enough to provide evidence of a historical Jesus. On this point, it is important to note that even G.A. Wells, who until recently was the champion of the christ-myth hypothesis, now accepts the historicity of Jesus on the basis of 'Q.'" ("Josh McDowell's 'Evidence' for Jesus")

British historian Michael Grant: "...if we apply to the New Testament, as we should, the same sort of criteria as we should apply to other ancient writings containing historical material, we can no more reject Jesus' existence than we can reject the existence of a mass of pagan personages whose reality as historical figures is never questioned...To sum up, modern critical methods fail to support the Christ-myth theory. It has 'again and again been answered and annihilated by first-rank scholars'. In recent years 'no serious scholar has ventured to postulate the non-historicity of Jesus' -- or at any rate very few, and they have not succeeded in disposing of the much stronger, indeed very abundant, evidence to the contrary." (Jesus: An Historian's Review of the Gospels [1977], pages 199, 200)

Anglican Bishop N.T. Wright: "It is quite difficult to know where to start, because actually the evidence for Jesus is so massive that, as a historian, I want to say we have got almost as much good evidence for Jesus as

for anyone in the ancient world....the evidence fits so well with what we know of the Judaism of the period....that I think there are hardly any historians today, in fact I don't know of any historians today, who doubt the existence of Jesus [aside from one or two]....It is quite clear that in fact Jesus is a very, very well documented character of real history. So I think that question can be put to rest." ("The Self-Revelation of God in Human History" from *There Is A God* by Antony Flew and Roy Abraham Varghese [2007])

Robert Van Voorst: "Contemporary New Testament scholars have typically viewed their [i.e. Jesus-mythers] arguments as so weak or bizarre that they relegate them to footnotes, or often ignore them completely....The theory of Jesus' nonexistence is now effectively dead as a scholarly question....Biblical scholars and classical historians now regard it as effectively refuted." (*Jesus Outside the New Testament* [2000], pages 6, 14, 16)

*Shattering the Christ Myth* is a welcome addition to the many evangelical defenses of Jesus Christ by well-known scholars such as R.T. France (*The Evidence for Jesus*), Moreland/Wilkins (*Jesus Under Fire*), and recently Boyd/Eddy (*The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition*). As a Catholic apologist, I also appreciated the brief chapter on "Leo's Line" explaining the "fable quote" sometimes attributed to Pope Leo X by mythicist skeptics.

My only complaint is the book is slightly "oversized" so it is not the size of your normal paperback and may not fit easily on your bookshelf. Nevertheless a definite 5-star effort from apologist J.P. Holding and company.

END

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