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Questioning Jesus Existence : An Eastertime Media Tradition.

John Stonestreet . (Northern Hemisphere)

Ah, springtime. Flowers blooming, birds singing, and articles questioning the historicity of Jesus hitting the newsstands.

Every year around March and December, many news outlets exhume the long-dead thesis that the New Testament is based on a mythological figure, not a Man who really lived, died, and rose from the grave two-thousand years ago. This year, CNN even republished an article from 2012 at CNN.com. In the piece, entitled, “Decoding Jesus: Separating Man from Myth,” John Blake suggests that Christ’s historical existence is an open question. CNN featured it at the top of their homepage as part of the push for their new series, “Finding Jesus: Faith, Fact, Forgery.”

Blake quotes the likes of Timothy Freke, author of “Jesus Mysteries” and former Baptist pastor Robert Price, author of “Deconstructing Jesus,” who both claim that the Gospels are forgeries or misunderstood allegories, and that the story of Jesus was copied from legends about pagan deities.

“In the age of the Internet and self-publishing,” writes Blake, “these arguments have gained enough traction that some of the world’s leading New Testament scholars feel compelled to publicly take them on.”

Now let me be clear: This is the very definition of fake news: No credible historian believes Jesus is a myth. Even among skeptics of religion, that theory has been abandoned. None other than Bart Ehrman, the agnostic biblical scholar and fierce critic of the New Testament, calls Jesus-deniers Internet conspiracy theorists trying to sell books, and compares them to Holocaust-deniers.

Dominic Crossan, another scholar who would never pass for an evangelical apologist, says he’s “certain” that Christ existed, and chalks up alternative theories to disdain, for the Prince of Peace. Keep in mind, neither Ehrman or Crosson would affirm anything historically Christian, such as that Jesus was not just a man but God—that He performed miracles, died for the sins of the world, and rose from the dead for our justification. But if anything, this fact makes their agreement on His existence even more powerful, not less.

On this issue, they represent the broad consensus among scholars that Christianity began with the life and death of a real and extraordinary Man. Of course, we Christians don’t believe that’s all there was to it. But when our

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neighbors tell us over the backyard fence that they've watched a documentary or read an article claiming Jesus is a myth, we have to be able to respond gently but confidently.

Even ancient writers hostile to Christianity like Josephus, Tacitus, and Pliny the Younger, confirm the existence of a Man from Nazareth who preached throughout Galilee and Judea, ran afoul of the authorities, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and sparked what would eventually become the world's largest religion.

And let's not forget the New Testament itself, manuscript fragments of which date to the early second century. Ravi Zacharias points out that the evidence for the life and words of Jesus is stronger than the evidence for Plato. Classicist Michael Grant sums it up best when he writes that "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."

Look, though many scholars who affirm Jesus' existence still reject the supernatural claims that make Him worthy of our worship, one thing is certain: Headlines do not equal history. And serious media should stop giving air-time and credibility to Jesus-deniers.

CBMC Au. News

CBMC Australia Board Met in Melbourne on 18th March.

Significant time was spent in working through matters for the Asian Convention. Weekly Prayer requests for the preparation / organisation of the Asian Convention will now be compiled and distributed. The Treasurer reported that we still solvent and able to pay our bills. (Thank you for renewed memberships and your grace donations.) Team activity was reported with Pennant Hills and Devonport. Less advanced planning with Melbourne CBD. The pilot Small Business seminars (Contingency Planning) have had to be placed on hold, at least until the 'Office' is functioning again. PRAY for the planning team and the marketing of the 21st Asian Convention on 25-27 October 2017. PRAY for the Board to be able get Small Business seminars underway. PRAY for the potential of gathering men for prayer in multiple locations across our capital cities.



CBMC Au Staff Vacancy.

We are acutely aware of the work that Trent was accomplishing in his role, since his departure from the CBMC Office. Again, we say a big thank you Trent for what you accomplished for our Ministry. We have been working to determine the scope and role required, and have had some discussions with people regarding filling the position of Office Administrator. PRAY for the Australian Board as they work to fill this important position for our ministry.

Planning of 21st CBMC Asian Convention.

Work continues in planning this Convention with the theme of 'being people of reconciliation' (2Cor.5:17-21). Our keynote speakers include Dr. Peter Jensen, Dr. Sen Sendjay, Mark Hofert, Pamela Lim, Peter Irvine, David Lung. The 'cbmcasianconvention.com' website has undergone some revision and the all-important Registration Form is now operational -PTL. We give thanks for Chris continuing to get this working despite serious family sickness / child care issues. PRAY for the replies of remaining speakers to be settled soon. PRAY for us as the organising team, as we knit the elements and presenters together for the reverence and honour of Jesus through a 'smooth' integrated program.

CBMC Au. Board looking for Prayer Partners, provision of Scholarships, and Volunteers. We are seeking your participation in these three areas. We now issue regular prayer updates for the progress of planning and for the people the Lord wants us to have attend this Conference from across Asia as well as from across this land. To help some people to attend we are seeking 'scholarships' to assist them cover the

cost of travel to Australia The very reason so many Australians find it economic to holiday overseas works against people coming here! Please plan now to attend the convention (Remember and mark the date now - 25th - 27th October). Can you volunteer to be in Brisbane for a week beforehand to help assemble Convention packs, be on hand to man information booths, etc?? PRAY about how you may invest in a new generation of men here and across Asia to be equipped to be Ambassadors for Jesus. PRAY about saving so you may come to Brisbane to help as a volunteer. (Ask about discount.) Pray, Look around, Ask and encourage men to attend the convention.

Tony Levick. Chairman, CBMC Au.

Please advise CBMC office - admin@cbmcaustralia.com.au .

How Would You Answer This Question!

A friend was hosting an international student in her home. One day the student asked “Why did God only promise Abraham three descendants?” After a little further discussion it turned out that where the student lived with the large amount of pollution in the sky, only three stars were ever visible if at all.

An evening trip away from the city light (pollution) followed so the student grasped the significance of just how vast and how many stars there are in our solar system, and give a better understanding of what God's promise meant.

Do we listen to what our friends say, and seek the clarification of what is behind the statement or question?

May we be a blessing by exercising 'Good Listening'!

Always be ready to give and answer to those who have a question, and do it with grace and love, and great patience, remembering we were once on the road to destruction. But now through God's grace we have the forgiveness of sins, and the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide us.

[Para. 1Peter 3:15; Eph.2]

(And remember do not choose a 'Full Moon'!!)

What do you first think when you see this photo?



Did you Laugh?

Did you think like the driver- 'Thankful that the truck did not roll or tip over the side of the excavation'?

Did you think 'How could that happen'?

Did you think about the congestion that this would cause on the mine road?

Did you think about how the truck could be unloaded and moved out of the way?

Did you think about how it might be repaired? ...

I suggest your perspective would be strongly conditioned by where 'you are standing' and what your experiences have been. Would you identify with the Mine Manager, with the Driver, other Drivers, the person in charge of keeping the roads in good repair, the Transport Manager, the Financial Controller?

Why am I talking about this? Unless we “stand where our colleagues, our friends are standing, it will be almost impossible our conversation will have meaning for them. It is folly for us to launch into a conversation about the need to have faith in Jesus from where we are 'standing'.

As we seek to mentor a younger man (if I am 70, my younger man may be 45-50) we have to go to where our friend(s) are 'standing', and patiently work from there, and without much of the Church / Christian talk we normally communicate with. With the help of the Holy Spirit we may then bring them to be the man God desires them to be.

After all, we can see this is what God did by having Jesus come into the world as a baby / man. God spoke directly to us through Jesus during his three years of ministry. Not only with words, but very graphically and deliberately at Passover, Jesus sacrificed his life as a ransom for me, and for you. In those three years he spoke about the Kingdom of God, and how we might be part of it.

Romans 10:14-15: 'How, then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? ...'

Remember fellow worker, remember Ambassador for Christ, it is Jesus the Messiah who has commissioned us to continue to carry out this ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:17 – 6:1.)
Tony Levick. Chairman, CBMC Au.

Have We Lost The Wonder of God's Grace and Our Salvation?

I always find it sobering to read Rev.3:15.

Consider being the Samaritan leper (one of ten – Lk.17:11-19) who was healed and returned to thank Jesus. What about the blind man begging outside Jericho. He immediately followed Jesus praising God when he was healed (Lk.18:35-43.).

The Gospels record for us a number of a number of amazing encounters with Jesus and the response the people made. There are two similar events that demonstrate the enormity of the events and the responses - Luke 7:36-50 and John 12:1-11. These ladies respond to Jesus with enormous generosity in anointing him with expensive perfumed oil.

I recently heard Michael Raiter challenge the audience this way: “Were the lives of the early missionaries who died within a short time of going to Africa, a waste?” “No!” Today we might even rephrase the question to focus on the loss of Christians in the areas of turmoil and conflict in the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Middle East: because they are Christian? Or we may feel our work is tiresome or not achieving anything. The answer is still 'No'. Whatever is given to the Lord Jesus is never a waste. Just as the perfumed oil poured over Jesus was not a waste.

We must never lose sight of the magnitude, the wonder, the enormity of God coming into this world to purchase us, to redeem us, to forgive us, so we can be sons and daughters of the most high God. May our gratitude never wane, since we could not stand to hear those words of Jesus 'you are neither hot nor cold. I will spit you out of my mouth...' Amen.
Tony Levick. Chairman.

Upcoming Events

Prayer meeting

Regular prayer meeting are held in the following locations

- Victoria
 - Horsham
 - Melbourne CBD
 - Burwood East
 - Warragul
- Queensland
 - Ipswich
 - Brisbane- Wooloongba (Korean)
- Tasmania
 - Coorparoo
 - Hobart
 - Launceston
 - Scotsdale
 - Ulverstone

Outreach events

New South Wales

- Pennant Hills – Outreach dinner 24th April. Speaker Graeme Rule

Tasmania

- Devonport – regular outreach events and forums are held

Queensland

- Brisbane – Coorparoo prayer meeting - Invitations extended to others
- Camp Hill – group meeting as part of Camp Hill Church of Christ men's group using Operation Timothy-continuing support.
- Wooloongabba – Korean group meets weekly for breakfast and reflection, planning events to connect with community

Victoria

- Melbourne CBD Prayer meeting Tuesday lunchtime
- Burwood East Prayer meeting Thursday Morning

Prayer Points

- 21st Asian CBMC Convention in Brisbane 25-27 October 2017- Finalising Program, setting marketing plan in action, seeking Scholarships and Sponsorship, '+, +, +, +'
- For the Australian Board as they seek replacement staff for Coordination & Administration.
- For the Australian Board as they plan activity in 2017 and develop and trial new Interest Seminars - Stalled <> Get going again!
- For members to invite a new generation to be involved in CBMC
- For Operation Timothy in Australia, that a new group of Paul's and Timothy's is established..
- For good faith related conversations for all our members.

Membership Renewal Reminder

Thanks for renewing your membership. We thank God for your partnership in Gospel ministry through CBMC Australia.

Our Task of demonstrating transformed lives in the Marketplace, helping others to investigate who Jesus is and what he has done is not yet complete. As a member of CBMC Australia our first priority of praying for one another is of great value and truly appreciated.

January Membership renewal forms have been emailed or posted to you. Please complete the form and return to the office. Or you can go online to <http://www.cbmcaustralia.com.au/donations/> and process your payment via credit card on our PayPal enabled site.

21st CBMC Asian Convention

HELP!.

To ensure we have the best CBMC Asian Convention we can, we need your assistance.

- We need you to pray
- We need you to help with the organizing
- We need you in Brisbane for the event



Dear CBMC Members and friends please pray for the organising team for this convention.

Pray for insight, wisdom and connections as the organising team and Board deliberate and plan for this event. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide the Speakers regarding their talk(s). Pray & Pray over your your friends and colleagues for them to attend. Pray for everyone involved in planning and resourcing this event.

Please join the prayer team : email admin@CBMCAsianConvention.com. Financial Support

Thank you to the members who regularly contribute to the ministry of CBMC across Australia. Your prayer and support is greatly appreciated in supporting the work we do.

We invite others to consider regularly partnering with CBMC as we look to new initiative for 2017. By supporting this ministry you are investing in us by

- Supporting our CBMC staff and volunteers
- Assisting in providing resources to members and guests.
- Increasing our reach and effectiveness



These activities cannot be done without the financial support of our members and friends. We invite you to give a once off gift or a monthly contribution towards the work of CBMC Australia.

You can give your support by:

- Cheque
- Credit Card (securely on our website <http://www.cbmcaustralia.com.au/donations/> or over the phone to our office)
- Bank Transfer (BSB: 083054 Account number: 24 836 1352)
 - Or contact our national office: admin@cbmcaustralia.com.au or call 07 3172 9365