

Now that I have devoted two posts to presenting (part of) my argument for why I think Jesus was probably not given a decent burial – the posts were portions of a chapter lifted from [How Jesus Became God](#) – I am in a position to begin to respond to the counter-arguments of Craig Evans, my evangelical friend and naysayer, whose essay “Getting the Burial Traditions and Evidences Right” is widely seen – at least by people who have said anything to me about the matter – as the best contribution in the response book [How God Became Jesus](#). In my replies to his arguments, I will call him “Craig,” hoping that this does not smack too much of over-familiarity. But, well, we’ve known each other for thirty years, have worked together on various film projects (documentaries that we have both in), and have had a number of cordial public debates. Referring to him as “Evans” might seem a bit contemptuous.

And truth be told, I’m not at all contemptuous of his scholarship or of this particular contribution to the discussion of whether or not Jesus was given a decent burial by Joseph of Arimathea. As I have said a couple of times already, his essay evokes considerable historical knowledge and demonstrates a wide-ranging familiarity with all of the literary and archaeological evidence, every piece of which is brought to bear on the problem. And so I mean no disrespect when I say that I think that Craig is completely wrong to intimate that the historicity of the burial tradition is a slam-dunk case. In my view his arguments are not convincing and time after time the evidence he adduces does not appear to say what he claims it says.

I will not discuss each and every point, sentence, and word in Craig’s rather long essay but will take on the arguments that strike me as the strongest and most important. If anyone thinks there is yet some other point that he raises that I need to address, when I’m done with these posts, just let me know and I’ll be happy to do so.

Before giving a summary of the key points and my response to them, I want, in this post and the next, to make two general points. The first is of a personal nature and is of almost no relevance to much of anything. But it’s one that I want to make because I think it only fair that everyone’s cards are clearly on the table for all to see. It’s also one that may be somewhat surprising to readers – even to Craig – to the extent that some may think that I’m not telling the truth. But I am, and here it is. In terms of what I personally believe and of what really matters to me, on the personal level ...

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