

Ben Witherington, a conservative evangelical Christian New Testament scholar, has asked me to respond to a number of questions about my book [Did Jesus Exist](#), especially in light of criticism I have received for it (not, for the most part, from committed Christians!). His blog is widely read by conservative evangelicals, and he has agreed to post the questions and my answers without editing, to give his readers a sense of why I wrote the book, what I hoped to accomplish by it, and what I would like them to know about it. He has graciously agreed to allow me to post my responses here on my blog, which, if I'm not mistaken, has a very different readership (although there is undoubtedly some overlap). It's a rather long set of questions and answers - over 10,000 words. So I will post them in bits and pieces so as not to overwhelm anyone. The Q's are obviously his, the A's mine.

Q. What prompted you to not merely write [Did Jesus Exist](#)? but prioritize it?

A. I had wanted to write the book for some time, for a simple reason. A few years ago I started getting emails from people asking me whether or not I thought Jesus existed. Some of these people indicated that they had heard that I thought Jesus did not exist, and they wanted to know if it was true. In fact, it was nowhere close to being true: I had already written a book showing in which I argued what I thought we could say with reasonable certainty about the things Jesus said and did ([Jesus: Apocayptic Prophet of the New Millennium](#)). And my idea has always been that for Jesus to say and do these things, he had to exist!

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