

QUESTION:

Was also wondering - and maybe you addressed this in your book ... would you feel an emotionally traumatic disappointment if it was conclusively proved that Jesus was indeed a mythical figure? In all honesty how would you feel if it were true beyond a doubt that all the arguments the 'mythicists' have presented were found to be correct (or mostly correct) regarding his assumed existence? This question is not meant to be offensive or unnecessarily provoking - I'm just curious.

RESPONSE:

I don't address this in the book, and I think it is a terrific question! The reason I do is this. I think every historian of religion who makes a case for one thing or another needs to be queried: what is at stake for you in the matter?

For example, I have participated a number of public debates with conservative evangelical Christian scholars who have wanted to insist that they can PROVE, historically, that Jesus was raised from the dead. Now I should state with vigor and emphasis - the only people on the face of the planet who think that it is possible to use historical methods to prove that Jesus was raised from the dead are precisely Christians who personally believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. No one else thinks so.

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