

In my previous post I explained how the term “myth” came to be applied to the miracle stories of the New Testament in the work of David Friedrich Strauss in 1835-36. This is all background to what happened to me personally – 150 years later! Before talking about how my views of the Bible changed once I realized many of its stories could not be literally, historically true, I should expand a bit on the very notion that, as Strauss thought, there could be true stories that didn’t happen. What?? Yup. Here’s how I explain it in my book [Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium](#).

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A lot – a very lot – has happened since Strauss published his [Life of Jesus](#) in 1836. Scores of scholars have pored over every detail of the Gospels, thousands of books and articles have been churned out, countless views have been marshaled, debated, believed, and spurned. And none of that is going to end soon, unless some of the people who think Jesus is coming back next week turn out to be right.

But one thing has remained constant since Strauss. There continue to be scholars – for most of this century, it’s been the vast majority of critical scholars – who think that he was right, not in all or even most of the specific things he said, but in the general view he propounded. There are stories in the Gospels that did not happen historically as narrated, but that are meant to convey a truth. Few scholars today would ...

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