This video is of a debate that I participated in nearly two years ago in Nova Scotia with Dr. Craig Evans, a very well-known and widely published scholar of the New Testament who is also a conservative evangelical Christian (not “ultra-conservative,” and nowhere near a fundamentalist – but still conservative). He is author of Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence and Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels. This was the first of two debates that took place, in two different locations, on subsequent evenings. The topic of the debate was: “Does the New Testament Present a Reliable Portrait of the Historical Jesus.” As you might imagine, Craig Evans argues that Yes, it does. I argue that No, it does not. Both of us, naturally enough, focus our attention on the four Gospels of the New Testament. We each gave an opening speech of 30 minutes; and then we had a chance for a rebuttal, followed by some Q & A.

I have to say, this was one of the favorite debates that I have ever done, in part because Craig Evans is a very learned scholar, a worthy opponent, a really good guy, and someone with whom I disagree massively!

Craig did his PhD in New Testament studies at a high quality institution, Claremont Graduate Program in Claremont California, one of the leading (non-evangelical) programs at the time. He has taught in a variety of places, including twenty-one years at Trinity Western University, where, among other things, he founded the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute. (He considers the Dead Sea Scrolls, along with the NT, as an area of major expertise.) He is now a chaired professor at Acadia Divinity College, part of Acadia University. He is extraordinarily well published in major journals and with reputable book presses; he has edited or authored sixty (count them, sixty!) books. Most of these, to be sure, are collections of essays (often by other people, in which he will himself contribute an essay, but for which he served as the editor of the whole); I don’t know how many of the sixty are stand-alone books (apart from collections of his own essays – which is his preferred mode of publication). But that’s not a problem at all – he is a scholar with a justified international reputation.

A member of this blog, Greg Monette, a graduate student working with Craig, put the event together, hosted us (very graciously and generously), and provided the introductions, as you will see.
Jesus and Brian!!!
Problem on the Site