

# Finding Jesus

Oakwood Bible Church

July 19, 2020

## Mark 8:27-29

**And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”**

**And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?”**

- **Fabricating Jesus**

- **Finding Jesus**

- **Following Jesus**

# **Fabricating Jesus**

# The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith

- There is (supposedly) a vast difference between the Christ that simple Christians believe they find in their Bibles and the real, historical Jesus – and it is the job of learned scholars, who know Greek and Aramaic and who study all of the evidence – to tell us who the Jesus of history *really* was.

# John Allegro (1923-1988)

- *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* (1970) – argues that “Jesus” in the New Testament is code for *amanita muscaria*, a hallucinogenic mushroom that Allegro believed lay behind the visions of the early Christians.



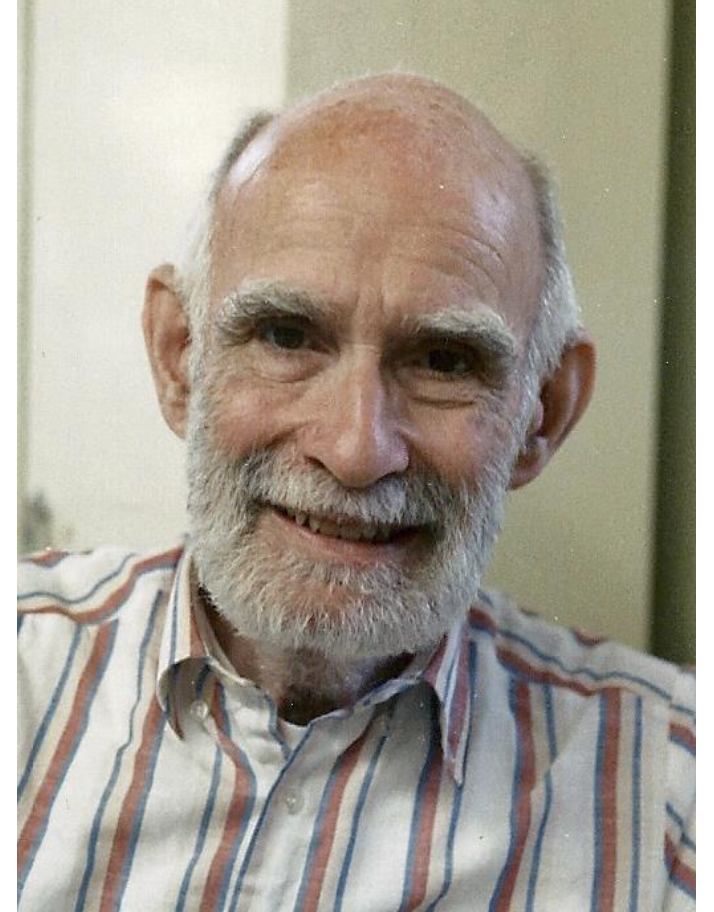
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# Morton Smith (1915-1991)

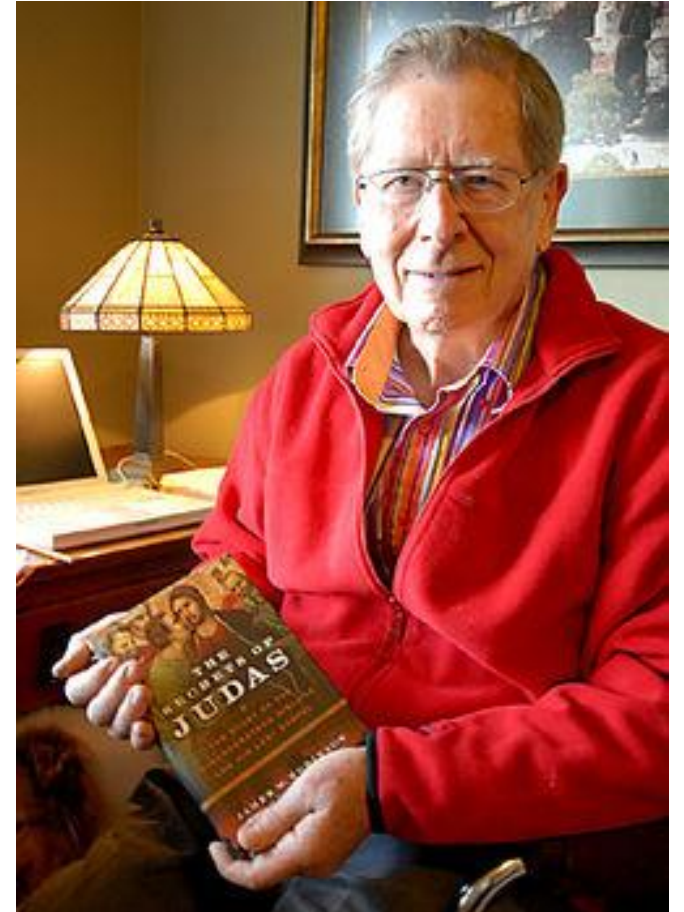
- *Jesus the Magician: Charlatan or Son of God?* (1978) – argues that Jesus was a clever con-man, a pagan trickster who pulled the wool over the eyes of Galilean peasants.





# James M. Robinson (1924-2016)

- “The Jesus of Q as Liberation Theologian,” paper presented at the Jesus Seminar in Canada in 1991 – argues that Jesus was a political revolutionary who preached a message of social liberation.



# Matthew Curtis Fleischer

- *Jesus the Pacifist* (2020) – argues that Jesus preached radical nonviolence.



# And on ... and on ...

- Jesus the Cynic philosopher (John Dominic Crossan)
- Jesus the eccentric desert teacher (Barbara Thiering)
- Jesus the psychotherapist (Stevan L. Davies)
- Jesus the innovative rabbi (Bruce Chilton)
- Jesus the apocalyptic prophet (E. P. Sanders)
- ...

- Why do so many smart people have such a hard time agreeing on who Jesus was?
- They have already decided who He *isn't*.

**If all of these smart people can't agree  
on who the historical Jesus really was,  
*maybe they're doing it wrong ...***

# **Finding Jesus**

# How to find things (in two easy steps)

- If you want to find something, the first step is *to look in the right place.*
- The second step is *to see what you are looking at.*

# How to find Jesus

- Look in the right place – the four Gospels
- See what you are looking at – honest reports of what Jesus said and did



***Unnecessary details and  
unexplained references***

## John 1:46

- “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”
- We never learn what that comment is about, and it plays no further role in the Gospel.

## John 2:12

- After the miracle at Cana, we are told, Jesus, his mother, brothers, and disciples go down to Capernaum for a few days.
- And ... what?

## John 3:25-26

- John mentions a dispute between some of John the Baptist's disciples and a Jew regarding purification ... but we never hear anything more about it.

## John 21:7

- When Peter realizes that Jesus is on the shore, he *puts on his outer garment* and jumps into the Sea of Galilee to wade to shore.
- It's the sort of vivid detail that someone might remember who *saw* it, but it isn't the sort of thing a first-century author would be likely to *invent*.

# And many, many more ...

- *two* disciples (John 1:35)
- *six* waterpots, each holding *twenty to thirty gallons* (John 2:6)
- *forty-six* years (John 2:20)
- *five* husbands (John 4:18)
- *thirty-eight* years of sickness (John 5:5)
- *three and a half* miles (John 6:19)
- *four* soldiers (John 19:23)
- *a hundred* yards (John 21:8)
- *a hundred fifty three* fish (John 21:11)

# More eyewitness details

- The loaves at the feeding of the five thousand were *barley* loaves (John 6:9)
- When the ointment was poured out for Jesus' anointing, *the house was filled with its fragrance* (John 12:3)
- The branches strewn at the triumphal entry into Jerusalem were *palm* branches (John 12:13)
- When Judas went out to betray Jesus, it was *night* (John 13:30)

# The unity of the portrait of Jesus

- His methods of teaching
- His love of solitude
- His use of object lessons
- His sarcasm
- His love of his friends



# **Following Jesus**

***What do we learn when we find Jesus?***

# His suffering gives us *consolation*

- Weeping over the death of a friend
- Mental anguish in Gethsemane
- Suffering on the cross

Hebrews 4:15 – For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses ...

# His preaching brings *conviction*

- “I like the Sermon on the Mount ...”
  - Oh, really?
- Jesus sees right through our pretense to holiness
  - Mark 10:17-27 – the rich young ruler

# His teaching gives us *courage*

- Challenging times, clear teaching:
  - Marriage – between one man and one woman, designed to last a lifetime (Mark 10:11-12)
  - Gender – God created us male and female (Mark 10:6)

## John 16:33

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”