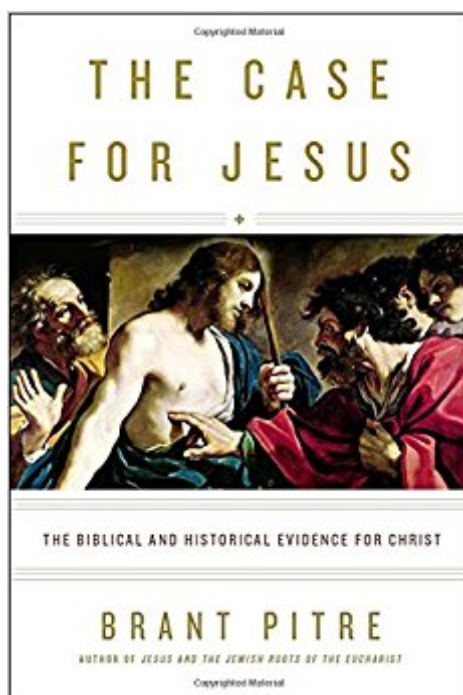


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# The Case For Jesus: The Biblical And Historical Evidence For Christ



## Synopsis

“This book will prove to be a most effective weapon | against the debunking and skeptical attitudes toward the Gospels that are so prevalent, not only in academe, but also on the street, among young people who, sadly, are leaving the Churches in droves.” — Robert Barron, author of *Catholicism*

For well over a hundred years now, many scholars have questioned the historical truth of the Gospels, claiming that they were originally anonymous. Others have even argued that Jesus of Nazareth did not think he was God and never claimed to be divine. In *The Case for Jesus*, Dr. Brant Pitre, the bestselling author of *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*, goes back to the sources—the biblical and historical evidence for Christ—in order to answer several key questions, including:

- Were the four Gospels really anonymous?
- Are the Gospels folklore? Or are they biographies?
- Were the four Gospels written too late to be reliable?
- What about the so-called “Lost Gospels,” such as *Q* and the Gospel of Thomas?
- Did Jesus claim to be God?
- Is Jesus divine in all four Gospels? Or only in John?
- Did Jesus fulfill the Jewish prophecies of the Messiah?
- Why was Jesus crucified?
- What is the evidence for the Resurrection?

As *The Case for Jesus* will show, recent discoveries in New Testament scholarship, as well as neglected evidence from ancient manuscripts and the early church fathers, together have the potential to pull the rug out from under a century of skepticism toward the traditional Gospels. Above all, Pitre shows how the divine claims of Jesus of Nazareth can only be understood by putting them in their ancient Jewish context.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Image (February 2, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0770435483

ISBN-13: 978-0770435486

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.9 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (88 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #29,988 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > New Testament > Jesus, the Gospels & Acts #43 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Christology #122 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles >

## Customer Reviews

This is a very meticulously reasoned argument attempting to show that Jesus had a Divine self-conception. That is, Jesus believed, and claimed, that he was God. Pitre begins by posing C.S. Lewis's famous "trilemma" to the reader. If Jesus claimed to be God, we have three ways to respond: he was either a Liar, Lunatic, or Lord. Pitre's work in this book strives to bring us back, face to face, with this trilemma. To accomplish this, Pitre needs to defeat another popular notion in the modern mind: that Jesus, or at least much of the Gospel material about him, was a "Legend." If Pitre can show that Jesus did, in fact, historically claim Divinity, we will be forced to respond to his claim and answer Jesus's own question for ourselves: "Who do you say that I am?" To accomplish this Pitre first attempts to show that the Gospels are historically reliable. He believes that, contrary to modern scholarly opinion, the Gospels were indeed written by the authors they have been attributed to (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), that they were intended to portray historically accurate biographical pictures of Jesus, and that they were written much more closely to the time of Jesus than liberal scholars assume (Pitre tentatively dates the synoptic Gospels all before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70). These three pieces of evidence: authorship, intent, and dating all lead Pitre to the conclusion that the Gospels give us historically accurate information about Jesus. After setting the stage by arguing for the accuracy of our sources, Pitre delves into the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and tries to show that although it is not always explicit (i.e. Jesus doesn't say "I am God, worship Me.") even the synoptics portray Jesus as claiming Divinity. Using evidence such as Jesus's use of the titles "Son of Man" and "I Am," prophecy from the book of Daniel, Jesus's calming of the storm, the transfiguration, the pronouncement of the forgiveness of the paralytic's sins, the riddle about the Son of David being David's Lord, the crucifixion, and the resurrection, Pitre makes his case. In the end, he believes that not only do the Gospel authors portray Jesus as Divine, but that these claims came from Jesus himself. Thus we are led, full circle, back to the trilemma. We can call Jesus Liar, Lunatic, or Lord, but not, according to Pitre, a Legend. This was a really interesting read from a conservative scholar. His exegesis of many Gospel passages illuminate how the Hebrew Scriptures provide a much needed backdrop for understanding each story. The Gospels are much more nuanced than we might first think and oftentimes one saying or image may evoke whole passages or concepts from the Old Testament.

that would have been apparent to early Jewish readers. As Pitre argues, understanding the Jewish context of the synoptic authors helps in understanding their Christology. In the end, I agree with Pitre that the Gospels are generally more historically accurate than "mainstream" scholars give them credit for. I think it's plausible that the Gospel titles reveal their true authors and that they were written fairly early after Jesus' death (before the fall of Jerusalem). I also agree that the Synoptics may implicitly ascribe Divinity to Jesus "although I don't think that is an open and shut case. If there were more explicit cases in the synoptic Gospels where Jesus claimed Divinity, it would help his case. It still seems to me the only explicit sayings we have come from the Gospel of John, which even Pitre doesn't seem to argue is historically reliable (at least he doesn't focus on this in the book). It's probably outside the scope of this book, but I would have loved to see Pitre address the idea of Jesus as Apocalyptic Prophet. He interacts with several scholars who accept this notion (EP Sanders, Dale Allison, Bart Ehrman, John Meier) and it's a viable option in the world of Historical Jesus scholarship. I think it's a relevant topic in all discussions surrounding a Historical Jesus and can be a large factor in how one answers the question of Jesus' identity. This study is worth reading regardless of your theological persuasion, and Pitre's arguments deserve serious consideration.

There is a lot of confusion out there about Jesus and you've probably come across various claims that "prove" Jesus was not God. These range from the idea the Gospels were anonymous, the existence of "lost" Gospels, the Gospels are folklore instead of biographies, a lack of evidence for the Resurrection, and more. Just as he did in another of his books that I really liked, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper*, Brant Pitre painstakingly builds his defense of Jesus. For each skeptical claim, there is a meticulous evidence trail examining Jesus, historical evidence, Jewish understanding, 1st century cultural context, and why we can trust what we've been told. This might sound drawn out or difficult, but I found it flowed easily and was easy to understand. I myself especially appreciated that Pitre never lets us forget the inherently Jewish nature of Jesus' teachings and his listeners' understanding. The parallels he points out, often in very clear charts, can be stunningly revealing. This is an absorbing book that often gave me the thrill of discovery. What else could you ask for?

Dr. Pitre is one of my favorite apologists. I have bought several of his classes and really enjoyed them. He really knows the Jewish roots of Christianity and even more he knows how to explain them

so the normal person (that's me) can understand. In this book, he does a great job explaining the veracity of the Gospels and showing Old Testament references to Christ coming. Highly recommend!

Judging by the unintelligent and unfounded negative responses to this book I thought another positive review couldn't hurt the case for the Jesus. Up until now I have also heard the same arguments for the unreliability of the Gospels. Brant Pitre's work is nothing short of brilliant. As is typical with all of his writings, this book is very well researched (with plenty of reliable references) and extremely well written and superbly presented. It is a very easy read and Dr. Pitre states the case for Jesus so plainly and simply, you would have to be a serious non-believer who won't give an inch to the truth to at least not consider the many valid points he makes. Personally I have never questioned the authority of the Gospels but I am very happy I have read this book. It will be a great reference for proving the authenticity of Christ's claims to be God, the case for Resurrection and proving the Gospels were written by the men who claim to have written them and not some accepted nonsense that they are just folklore. A fascinating and interesting read. Please open your mind for at least a moment and consider that this author has to say. At the very least it will give you some hard questions to chew on and some plain facts that are difficult to refute.

Love this book - (I also love that the only person to give this a negative review falls short on intelligent criticism). It is well organized and thought out. It is systematic in addressing "the early church didn't think Jesus was Christ" approaches. I highly recommend it.

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