

TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: David Smith

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Shannon Smith

#452 Standing on the Promises

#76 How Great Thou Art

Scripture Reading by: Jackson Burgess

#881 Mansion Over the Hilltop

Lord's Supper and Contribution

#528 I Know That My Redeemer Lives

Sermon: "Love Does Not Boast"

Philippians 2:5-8

#915 Trust & Obey

#869 We're Marching to Zion

Closing Prayer by: Andre Jones

Welcome by: Don Taylor

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Shannon Smith

#753 Farther Along

#590 Jesus Is All the World to Me

Scripture Reading: Brooks McKelroy

Prayer by: Bob Parker

#454 Rock of Ages

Sermon: "Twelve Ordinary Men: John"

John 21:20, 24

#939 Oh, Why Not Tonight

#129 Amazing Grace

Closing Prayer by: Ken Coleman

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 6:00pm — Worship

Wednesday: 10:00am — Ladies Bible Class, 7:00pm — Bible Study Classes

July 29, 2018

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

Galatians 5:1

A Mythical Jesus?

With the rise of the internet, it is more likely than ever that you will encounter the theory that Jesus is a mythical figure. This has been a settled issue among scholars for decades; not even the most skeptical ancient historians or liberal theologians doubt the existence of a first-century Palestinian man named Jesus. Yet the popular imagination runs rampant with tales of conspiracy and corruption, myth and fabrication, and ubiquitous parallels of Jesus to ancient pagan gods. Perhaps some of you have already run across this idea.

According to Robert M. Price, one of the leading proponents of this view, the Christ myth theory rests on three grounds: 1) There is no mention of a miracle-working Jesus in the secular sources; 2) The epistles, written earlier than the Gospels, do not evidence a recent historical Jesus; and 3) The Jesus story of the epistles strongly resembles Middle Eastern religions based on dying and rising gods. Let's consider each of these arguments briefly.

The assertion that there is no miracle-working Jesus attested in secular sources is easily refuted. The Jewish historian Josephus describes Jesus as a “doer of wonderful works” (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.63-64). This passage is not without controversy; it is possible a later Christian has tampered with the text to make it more strongly affirm Jesus. Even so, the scholarly consensus is that most of the passage—including describing Jesus as a “doer of wonderful works”—is authentic. If we discount Josephus, there is still the Talmud, the written tradition of the rabbis, attributing Jesus' execution to practicing magic or sorcery – a clear indication of performing great works. In short, this argument rests on a very tendentious reading of the evidence; even if true, it would not indicate that there was no historical Jesus, just, at most, that he performed no great miracles.

The second contention, that Paul's epistles do not demonstrate a particular historical context for Jesus, is also easily disproved. The nature of the epistles, as letters to already formed Christian communities familiar with the story of Jesus, explains why there would be no long rehearsal of Jesus's life like the Gospels. Nevertheless, there are several specifics woven throughout Paul's writings. Jesus was a descendent of David (**Romans 1:3**) and was therefore Jewish (**Galatians 4:4**). He was crucified (**1 Corinthians 1:23**), a characteristically Roman method of execution for rebels. He had a brother, James (**Galatians 1:19**). Further, there is the matter of **1 Corinthians 15**, where Paul lists numerous eyewitnesses to a bodily resurrection of Jesus who could still be consulted. The idea that the epistles do not reveal a recent historical Jesus will not stand up to scrutiny.

Our Sick

Doris Trahan will be taking chemo treatments in the future.

Frances Petree is in Fall Creek Rehab in Humble.

Cheryl Mast is in Liberty Health Care room 601 for therapy.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, James Scott, Gary Nielsen, Harold Cryer, Gerald Lucy, Steve Ward, Teresa McKewen, Jackie David, Patricia Padon, Frank & Tina Garcia, Ronnie Davis, Bill Lunceford, Eric Davis, J. P. Williams, Mark Wilcox, Phillip Cottle

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Pauline Taylor, Winona Angelle, Pat Henley, Myrtle Sheffield, Ronnie Rubit, Joe Leonard

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Mwanza, Africa, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Plastic Bags

The Food Bank is in need of plastic grocery bags. A barrel is in the foyer.

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meet Monday, July 30th at 7:00 pm.

We will be having a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Aug. 7th at 8:30 am.

Primetimers will be going to Italianio's in Atascocita on Tuesday, Aug. 14th at 4:30 pm. A signup sheet is on the bulletin board.

New Address & Phone Number

Please make note of the new address and phone number for Peggy McIntosh. Her physical address is 402 Bobcat Lane #3 Daisette, TX 77533, and mailing address is P O Box 393, Daisetta, TX 77533. Her phone number is 936-536-1026.

Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to Joe Leal and his family on the death of his brother, Henry Caza-res. He passed away Monday night and the visitation is today from 3-9 pm at Leal Funeral Home, 2200 Wilcrest, Houston.

Privilege to Serve Sunday, July 29th

Communion Preparation: Sara Smathers

Nursery Attendants: Pat Hobbs

Children's Bible Hour: Tania Balch

Teen Helpers: River Lucy, Annie McKelroy

Communion Preparation for Sunday, Aug. 5th: Susan Smith

Nursery Attendants for Sunday, Aug. 5th: Lynette Ward, Debra Faneros

Children's Bible Hour for Sunday, Aug. 5th: Emily Nance

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The final pillar for the mythicists is that the Jesus story is a type of dying and rising god myth. The idea, popular among the history of religions school in the late 19th early 20th centuries, is that these gods were originally related to agricultural cycles, "dying" and "rising" annually. Eventually, myths of these gods such as Attis, Osiris, Mithras and others were reinterpreted into the mystery religions of classical antiquity. The argument is that the Christ myth was originally a variation on this theme.

The evidence is sorely lacking for this supposed category of gods existing anywhere other than in the minds of scholars consumed with parallelism. As Jonathan Z. Smith, a religious historian and professor at the University of Chicago notes:

All of the deities that have been identified as belonging to the class of dying and rising deities can be subsumed under the two larger classes of disappearing deities or dying deities. In the first case, the deities return but have not died; in the second case, the gods die but do not return. There is no unambiguous instance in the history of religions of a dying and rising deity ("Dying and Rising Gods," *Encyclopedia of Religion*; 2nd ed., Macmillan, 2005, 4:2535).

These myths all existed for centuries in different forms; those which do arguably exhibit some trace of a resurrection belief only do so from a much later period, the 3rd and 4th centuries AD in particular, when it is likely these mystery cults are conscious of the growing threat of Christianity. Indeed, mythicists are guilty of a form of this influence indirectly, by interpreting pagan myth through a Christian lens, using Christian terms to describe their findings; it is no wonder that "parallels" exist using such a method.

"Stand Firm in...Liberty"

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