

Adult Education Series
The Historical Jesus
Professor Bart D. Ehrman, Ph.D., M.Div., The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
October 14, 2018 Through May 26, 2019
9:00 - 9:50 a.m. Fireside Room

Worshiped around the globe by more than a billion people today, Jesus is undoubtedly the single most important figure in the story of Western civilization and one of the most significant in world history altogether. Yet, Jesus of Nazareth presents unique challenges to the historian, as Professor Bart D. Ehrman explains in this 24-lecture course on the search for the Jesus of history. Join him for an erudite survey of sources, methods, contexts, and problems, and then weigh his carefully thought-out historical interpretation of the words and deeds of the man from Galilee.

October 14, 2018

Special on Martin Luther and the Reformation (Part 1)

October 21, 2018

Special on Martin Luther and the Reformation (Part 2)

October 28, 2018

"Luther" Movie (Part 1)

November 4, 2018

"Luther" Movie (Part 2)

November 11, 2018 **1 The Many Faces of Jesus**

Jesus is undoubtedly the most significant figure in the history of Western civilization. Yet even scholars who have devoted their lives to studying the ancient sources about him come to widely varying conclusions. Working from a strictly historical perspective that neither presupposes nor disallows any particular beliefs, what can we learn about what Jesus most likely said and did?

November 18, 2018

Consecration Sunday - No Class Today

November 25, 2018 **2 One Remarkable Life**

To begin the study of the historical Jesus, it may be best to start by examining the world within which the Christian religion was born. That was a world largely populated by "pagans" (i.e., people who, unlike the Jews and then later the Christians, believe not in one but in many gods.)

December 2, 2018 **3 Scholars Look at the Gospels**

Scholars have approached the Gospels in a number of ways. The monumental work of D. F. Strauss, a German writing in the 1830s, argues that the Gospels are best understood as containing history-like stories that intend to convey truth but did not occur as they were narrated. Why do most scholars today — who do not subscribe to Strauss's precise notion — still find his general approach highly illuminating?

December 9, 2018 **4 Fact and Fiction in the Gospels**

Scholars question the historical accuracy of some gospel accounts not out of hostility toward Christianity — many are committed Christians — but because of historical evidence. What is this evidence, and how do historians assess it?

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December 16, 2018 **5 The Birth of the Gospels**
The Gospels — which do not claim to be eyewitness accounts — appear to date from 35-65 years after the events that they narrate. Thus, for a generation, accounts of Jesus were passed on by word of mouth. Is it possible for us to move "behind" the written accounts to learn more about this original oral tradition, and perhaps even about Jesus himself as a historical person?

December 23, 2018

Christmas Break - No Class Today

December 30, 2018

New Year's Break - No Class Today

January 6, 2019 **6 Some of the Other Gospels**
In addition to the New Testament, other written sources about Jesus have come down to us from antiquity. What are these other, noncanonical Gospels like? Who wrote them, and when? What sources did they use? How much can they tell us about what Jesus himself actually said and did?

January 13, 2019 **7 The Coptic Gospel of Thomas**
This book, unearthed in Egypt in 1945, consists of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus. Many resemble sayings in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; others are different. What were the sources for Thomas?

January 20, 2019 **8 Other Sources**
First-century pagan authors mention Jesus only twice, in passing. The rest of the New Testament outside the Gospels likewise adds little historical evidence. But there is a hypothetical source to consider — the now-lost document called "Q," from which both Matthew and Luke seemingly drew.

January 27, 2019 **9 Historical Criteria—Getting Back to Jesus**
How can the available sources be used to recover the words and deeds of Jesus? Scholars apply three specific criteria for establishing historically reliable material. In this lecture you learn about the first of the three.

February 3, 2019 **10 More Historical Criteria**
In addition to the criterion of "independent attestation," scholars use two others to help gauge the historical reliability of traditions about Jesus. From this lecture, you'll learn the logic behind these criteria and then you'll see how they apply to accounts drawn from both canonical and noncanonical sources.

February 10, 2019 **11 The Early Life of Jesus**
Using the criteria outlined in the preceding two lectures, which traditions about the birth and childhood of Jesus can be said to be historically authentic?

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| February 17, 2019 | 12 Jesus in His Context
The history of Palestine was a story of war and foreign domination. The Romans took over Israel about 60 years before Jesus was born. Different forms of Judaism had emerged too, though Jesus himself was aligned with no sect, and had deep differences with at least some. |
| February 24, 2019 | 13 Jesus and Roman Rule
Under Roman rule, some Jews embraced convictions that modern scholars group under the label "apocalypticism." According to this set of beliefs, God would soon smash the forces of evil and usher the chosen people into the divine kingdom. Did Jesus himself proclaim some such views? |
| March 3, 2019 | 14 Jesus the Apocalyptic Prophet
Why have many scholars since Albert Schweitzer found this apocalyptic view of Jesus credible? How does it pass the three tests of historical credibility and help us to understand both the origins and the aftereffects of Jesus' public ministry? |
| March 10, 2019 | 15 The Apocalyptic Teachings of Jesus
Having assessed the case for considering Jesus in some sense a Jewish apocalypticist, you can turn to a consideration of some of the things he taught regarding the coming judgment and kingdom of God. |
| March 17, 2019 | 16 Other Teachings of Jesus in their Apocalyptic Context
It is with good reason that Jesus is widely regarded as one of the greatest ethical teachers of all time. By radicalizing the Mosaic commands to love God and one's neighbor wholeheartedly, Jesus presented a different understanding of what it meant to follow the God of the Jews from other leading teachers of his day. |
| March 24, 2019 | 17 The Deeds of Jesus in their Apocalyptic Context
Some scholars have begun to question the view of Jesus as an apocalypticist. This lecture examines two ways scholars have sought to explain evidence that would support an apocalyptic understanding of Jesus. |
| March 31, 2019 | 18 Still Other Words and Deeds of Jesus
Scholars need not deny the possibility of miracles to admit that historical research can never demonstrate their actual occurrence. Historians can, however, discuss recorded reports of miracles. Was Jesus widely held to be able to expel demons, heal the sick, and perform other miracles? |
| April 7, 2019 | 19 The Controversies of Jesus
Jesus often met with opposition. This lecture explores the traditions of Jesus' rejection and some of his disputes with the Pharisees. How did Jesus' radical emphasis on the command to love sit with Scriptural demands for ritual purity? |
| April 14, 2019 | 20 The Last Days of Jesus
There is better documentation for Jesus' final week than for any other period of his life. He went to Jerusalem at Passover. At the temple he caused a disturbance. Why? As Jesus kept preaching, local authorities arranged to have him quietly arrested. Jesus had a last meal with his disciples, warning them that his enemies were about to strike. |

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April 21, 2019

Easter Day - No Class Today

April 28, 2019

21 The Last Hours of Jesus

How precisely did Judas Iscariot betray Jesus? Jesus was not, after all, in hiding. Why did Judas betray Jesus? How did the local Jewish authorities investigate Jesus? Why did they turn him over to the Romans?

May 5, 2019

22 The Death and Resurrection of Jesus

How good are the sources for what happened at the trial of Jesus? Can they help explain why the Jewish authorities handed Jesus over to Pilate, who ordered immediate torture and crucifixion? Despite discrepancies in their accounts of what transpired at Jesus' tomb, all of the sources agree in important ways.

May 12, 2019

23 The Afterlife of Jesus

The first Christians were Jewish apocalypticists. They believed that God would raise the dead in the end time, and that Jesus — the first raised — was a major figure in this divine triumph over evil. What happened when people from different backgrounds began to join the church?

May 19, 2019

24 The Prophet of the New Millennium

If historians seeking to learn what Jesus said and did need to take his context into account as they examine his life, theologians and believers who are interested in appropriating that message need to scrutinize it in light of their own situations.

About the Lecturer: Dr. Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He completed his undergraduate work at Wheaton College and earned his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Professor Ehrman has written or edited 27 books, including four best sellers on The New York Times list: *Misquoting Jesus: The Story behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*; *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question — Why We Suffer*; *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know about Them)*; and *Forged: Writing in the Name of God — Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are*. Professor Ehrman also served as president of the Society of Biblical Literature, Southeastern Region; book review editor of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*; editor of the Scholars' Press monograph series *The New Testament in the Greek Fathers*; and coeditor-in-chief for the journal *Vigiliae Christianae*.

Professor Ehrman received the John William Pope Center Spirit of Inquiry Award, the UNC Students' Undergraduate Teaching Award, the Phillip and Ruth Hettleman Prize for Artistic and Scholarly Achievement by Young Faculty, and the Bowman and Gordon Gray Professorship (awarded for excellence in undergraduate teaching).