

# WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

## ANSWERING CONTROVERSIAL CLAIMS ABOUT CHRIST

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When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

**MATTHEW 16:13-15**

## INTRODUCTION

When Jesus asked his disciples the question “Who do you say I am?” he was also asking each and every one of us today that very question. The various opinions that have been expressed regarding the true identity of Jesus are interesting, whether or not we agree with them, because all of us have an idea of who Jesus was and it's only natural for us to want to know what others think about him. There are some who say that Jesus was simply a myth and never really existed, being only a fictitious moral type on the order of Robin Hood. Some say that Jesus was a great moral teacher like the Buddha or Mahatma Gandhi, but that he was only a man and certainly not God in the flesh. Others say that Jesus was an Eastern mystic who had spent time in foreign lands studying with religious leaders, monks and gurus in his youth, during the so-called “missing years”. Still others say that Jesus fled Palestine after a failed crucifixion and lived a long life with a wife and family, always teaching and preaching his message of love and compassion wherever he went. Countless others have offered diverse explanations as to the true identity of Jesus, but only the pages of the Bible can offer us a reliable explanation for the answer to the question “Who was, and is, Jesus?”

There are many controversial claims about Jesus, and it would be a major undertaking to explore each one of them, so this paper will focus on only three claims:

1. The claim that Jesus never even existed.
2. The claim that the “lost years” of Jesus were spent traveling in the East and possibly elsewhere, where he studied the beliefs of other religions and wove those beliefs into his own personal theology which he later taught in Judea.
3. The claim that Jesus survived the crucifixion and fled to India or some other far away land, living to a very old age with a wife and children.

The goal of this paper is not to exhaustively cover each of these claims, but rather to make the reader aware of the claims so that he or she may be familiar with them and to be “ready with an answer” (**I PETER 3:15**) if asked to comment about them. I have provided a list of resources for further study at the end of this paper, so that anyone who is interested in reading more will know where to begin.

## CLAIM #1: JESUS NEVER REALLY EXISTED

This is a claim that is made mostly by skeptics in general and atheists in particular. The following quote is attributed to the late philosopher Bertrand Russell, a staunch atheist and bitter opponent of Christianity:

**Historically it is quite doubtful whether Christ ever existed at all, and if he did we do not know anything about him.**

Along the same line is this statement by current atheist-activist Frank Zindler:

**It is easier to account for the facts of early Christianity if Jesus were a fiction than if he once were real.**

The apostle Paul writes that if the resurrection never occurred, then our faith is in vain (**1 CORINTHIANS 15:14**). Some Christian antagonists want to go a step further: If Jesus never even existed in the first place, then your faith is really in vain!

## **THE BIG PROBLEM FOR CLAIM #1: NON-BIBLICAL WRITINGS ABOUT JESUS**

It is important to know that there are many early historical writings regarding Jesus that come from non-Christian historians. Most of these historians saw Christianity as a nuisance at best and a plague at worst, and if Jesus were simply a myth they would have been more than happy to bury the belief in the risen Christ. They did not, however, because they knew that Christianity was based upon a real Jesus who had many eyewitnesses to both his miracles and his post-resurrection appearances in Judea. These writers may not have agreed with the followers of Jesus that miracles and a resurrection really took place, but they knew that Jesus was a great teacher who had once lived among them in first century Judea.

### **NON-BIBLICAL WRITINGS FROM GENTILE SOURCES**

Mara bar Serapion, a Syrian historian and scholar, is believed to be responsible for a c. 73 AD letter which now resides in the British Museum that compares the deaths of Socrates, Pythagoras and Jesus:

**What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise King? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished...But Socrates did not die for good; he lived on in the teaching of Plato. Pythagoras did not die for good; he lived on in the statue of Hera. Nor did the wise King die for good; he lived on in the teaching which he had given.**

The Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus wrote in **ANNALS OF IMPERIAL ROME** in c. 108 AD of Nero's attempt to relieve himself of the guilt of burning Rome:

**Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also.**

The Roman statesman and historian Pliny the Younger wrote to the emperor in c. 112 AD how he had killed multitudes of Christian men, women, and children when he was the governor of Bithynia. This is recorded in **EPISTLES**:

**All who denied that they were or had been Christians I consider should be discharged, because they called upon the gods at my dictation and did reverence, with incense and wine, to your image...they curse Christ, which a genuine Christian cannot be induced to do.**

Pliny the Younger also wrote in **EPISTLES**:

**[Christians] were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verse of a hymn to Christ as to a god, and bound themselves to a solemn oath not to do any wicked deeds and never to deny a truth when they should be called upon to deliver it up.**

Suetonius, a Roman historian and court official under Hadrian, referred to Christ using the alternate spelling Chrestus in his c. 120 AD work **IN THE LIFE OF CLAUDIUS**:

**As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he [Claudius] expelled them from Rome.**

Lucian, a Greek writer of the second century who was very critical of Christianity, refers to Christ in **ON THE DEATH OF PEREGRINE**:

**The man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world...Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they were all brothers one of another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws.**

Thallus was a Samaritan-born historian who wrote c. 52 AD about the darkness at the time of Christ's crucifixion. Julius Africanus, a Roman historian, wrote in c. 221 AD:

**Thallus, in the third book of his histories, explains away this darkness [at the time of the crucifixion] as an eclipse of the sun - unreasonably, as it seems to me.**

This was unreasonable because a solar eclipse cannot take place at the time of a full moon, and it was the time of the paschal full moon when Christ died. The paschal full moon is that first full moon of the northern spring that is used to determine the date of Passover and, since the time of Christ, Easter.

### **NON-BIBLICAL WRITINGS FROM JEWISH SOURCES**

Josephus ben Matthias, a Jewish historian who later took the Roman name Titus Flavius Josephus, wrote only a short time after Christ. He wrote about Jesus in **ANTIQUITIES**:

**Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works - a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many Gentiles. He was the Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestions of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not foresake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and the ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.**

Please know that this is a disputed passage. Since Josephus was not a Christian it was unlikely that he himself wrote "if it be lawful to call him a man" or "he was the Christ". Since no unbelieving Jew would say such a thing about Christ, these statements were likely added by Christian scribes at a later date. The important thing is that Josephus knew that Jesus was a real person who had lived shortly before his time.

Josephus, also in **ANTIQUITIES**, wrote about James the earthly brother of Jesus:

**[Ananus] assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned to death.**

The Babylonian Talmud contains a reference to Jesus using his Hebrew name Yeshu, in **TRACTATE SANHEDRIN**:

**On the eve of Passover they hanged Yeshu...he hath practiced sorcery and beguiled and led astray Israel. Let everyone knowing aught in his defense come and plead for him. But they found naught in his defense and hanged him on the eve of Passover.**

### **SOME INTERESTING FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

An edict was issued against grave robbing by the highest of Roman authorities near the time of Christ's crucifixion (the exact date is unknown). Believed to have been issued by either Tiberius (14-37 AD) or Claudius (41-54 AD), this writing is now known as the **EDICT OF CAESAR**. An inscription of it was found in Nazareth:

**Ordinances of Caesar, it is my pleasure that graves and tombs remain undisturbed in perpetuity for those who have made them for the cult of their ancestors or children or members of their house. If however any man lay information that another has either demolished them, or has in any other way extracted the buried, or has maliciously transferred them to other places in order to wrong them, or has displaced the sealing of other stones, against such one I order that a trial be instituted, as in respect of the gods, so in regard to the cult of mortals. For it shall be much more obligatory to honor the buried. Let it be absolutely forbidden for anyone to disturb them, in case of contravention I desire that the offender be sentenced to capital punishment...**

Was this edict due to a reaction against the turmoil in Israel caused by the resurrection of Christ and the resultant empty tomb? That is food for thought.

### **SUMMARY OF CLAIM #1**

To summarize, there are several historical references to Christ that were written by well-respected, non-Christian historians shortly after the time of Christ. These writings clearly reveal that Jesus was a real person who lived in Judea during the first century. If Jesus never really existed and was nothing more than an imaginary moral example, then why did these trusted historians write about him as if he were a real person? Although it is obvious that not everyone believed that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, it is clear that Jesus was once a real flesh-and-blood person.

## **CLAIM #2: THE "LOST YEARS" WERE SPENT IN DISTANT LANDS STUDYING OTHER RELIGIONS WHICH BECAME PART OF CHRIST'S PERSONAL THEOLOGY**

According to New Age proponents and some historical revisionists, Jesus was quite the world traveler in his youth, during the so-called "missing years" (approximately 13-30 years of age). The usual claim is that Jesus traveled first to India, where he studied Hindu beliefs with Brahmin priests, and then on to Tibet, where he continued his spiritual growth under the tutelage of Buddhist monks. Some claim that Jesus also spent time in Persia (modern Iran) studying Zoroastrianism and astrology with the magi, some of whom had been present at his birth or early infancy. Others claim that Jesus may have made it all the way to China, where he would have become familiar with the teachings of Confucius and Lao Tsu, the founder of Taoism. Not content to let it go at that, still others claim that after this whirlwind tour of the East, Jesus returned west not to Judea but to Egypt, where he studied the occultic mystery religions of that ancient civilization. There is also a theory that Jesus in his youth traveled to the British Isles with his uncle Joseph of Arimathea, where he would have become aware of the teachings of Druid priests. Greece, the birthplace of Western philosophy, has also been proposed as a stopping point in his many travels. According to some Jesus dialogued with the great philosophers of that land and amazed them with his insight, just as he did with the learned scholars of the Temple in Jerusalem at age 12. An important question should become very obvious: With all of this traveling, when did Jesus have time to learn about carpentry?

After his visit to the Temple in Jerusalem at age 12, **LUKE 2:52** goes on to state:

**And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**

After this verse of scripture, we encounter a Jesus who is well into his adult years and preparing to begin his ministry. The question that so many throughout history have asked is "What did Jesus do, and was he always in Judea, during those 18 years?" The silence of scripture is, for many, both troubling and fascinating.

None of the New Testament writers wrote of any travels to distant lands during the "missing years", and neither do any of the Early Church Fathers as well. In fact, next to nothing is revealed to us about Jesus during these years from any reliable source. It turns out that this claim of a traveling Jesus is traced to a Russian journalist and adventurer who lived rather recently.

### **THE CURIOUS CASE OF NICHOLAS NOTOVITCH...AND SOME BIG PROBLEMS WITH HIS STORY**

Nicholas Notovitch was a Russian journalist who wrote **THE UNKNOWN LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST**, which still holds great appeal for many who believe that Jesus was trained by spiritual masters in the East. Notovitch visited India and Tibet in the 1880s. When visiting a Tibetan Buddhist monastery, he was supposedly told by one of the head monks that Jesus - known to the monks of the time as Issa - had spent time in the monastery studying the writings of the Buddha. According to the head monk who spent time with Notovitch, Jesus came to India and Tibet while still very young, and Jesus eventually mastered the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures before returning to Judea to preach to the masses there. The head monk eventually trusted Notovitch enough to show him the scrolls - known collectively as **THE LIFE OF SAINT ISSA** - that recorded the time that Jesus spent in the monastery.

Archibald Douglas, who was a professor at Government College in Agra, India around this time, wanted to know if Notovitch had really seen such scrolls that described a young Jesus in Tibet. Douglas retraced the steps of Notovitch and visited the monastery for himself, and interviewed the head monk. It was found that Notovitch was never a "visiting scholar" at the monastery and that no scrolls existed in the monastery that tell about a great master named Issa. The conversation between Douglas and the head monk may be found in **JESUS AND THE GODS OF THE NEW AGE** by Ross Clifford and Philip Johnson, pages 220-222.

There is another really big problem for the Notovitch claim: Buddhism did not make it to Tibet until the seventh century, or 600 years after the time of Jesus. The popular Buddhist writer Christmas Humphreys states on pages 190-191 in his 1962 book **BUDDHISM**:

**Before the seventh century, the sole religion of Tibet was the Bon (Shamanism)...Some time in the fifth century AD, a number of Buddhist books were brought into Tibet from India, but they seem to have been ignored, and it was not until the reign of King Srongtsen Gampo, in the middle of the seventh century, that Buddhism became a force in Tibet.**

Jesus could not have studied Buddhism in a Tibetan Buddhist monastery simply because there were no Buddhist monasteries in Tibet during his time. Additionally, Notovitch had another problem, as discussed in John Powers **INTRODUCTION TO TIBETAN BUDDHISM** (pages 128-129, 134) which is summarized in **JESUS AND THE GODS OF THE NEW AGE** (pages 222-223):

**He claimed that the scrolls he saw were translated into Tibetan from the sacred Pali language. The fact of the matter is that no Buddhist literature of Tibet was ever translated directly from Pali; instead they came from Sanskrit or Chinese. The Pali language is the sacred tongue of the Theravadan Buddhists of Sri Lanka and southern India.**

It is of great interest that the current leader of Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama, has never quoted from the **LIFE OF SAINT ISSA** in his dialogues with Christian leaders. If the scrolls exist, surely he would be interested in utilizing them as a bridge to dialogue with the leaders of the church. It is safe to assume that he does not quote from them because they do not exist.

### **NEW AGE BOOKS CLAIMING JESUS WAS IN INDIA**

Two later works that are considered by many to be valuable resources promoting the view that Jesus was an Eastern mystic are **THE AQUARIAN GOSPEL OF JESUS** by Civil War army chaplain Levi Dowling and New Age guru Elizabeth Clare Prophet's **THE LOST YEARS OF JESUS**. Dowling's book was supposedly "downloaded" from the psychic realm, and Prophet's material relies on the claims of Notovitch and several New Age sources. Although well-respected among the New Age crowd, both Biblical and non-religious researchers have difficulties with their psychic and New Age presuppositions and their lack of archaeological and historical support.

The following description of the claims of Dowling is from Dr. Ron Rhodes, one of the most prolific Christian authors of our time and an expert on the New Age Movement. The article may be found at [www.ronrhodes.org/JesusNAM.html](http://www.ronrhodes.org/JesusNAM.html) and is an excellent resource on the topic of Jesus' supposed travels in far away lands:

**The bulk of Levi's gospel, first published in 1911, focuses on the education and travels of Jesus. After studying with Rabbi Hillel (a Jewish scholar), Jesus allegedly traveled to India where he spent years studying among the Brahmins and Buddhists. Jesus supposedly became interested in studying in the East after Joseph (Jesus' father) hosted Prince Ravanna from India. During his visit, Ravanna asked "that he might be the patron of the child; might take him to the East where he could learn the wisdom of the Brahms. And Jesus longed to go that he might learn: and after many days his parents gave consent." So "Jesus was accepted as a pupil in the temple Jagannath; and here he learned the Vedas and the Manic laws." Jesus then visited the city of Benares of the Ganges. While there, "Jesus sought to learn the Hindu art of healing, and became the pupil of Udraka, greatest of the Hindu healers." And Jesus "remained with Udraka until he had learned from him all there was to be learned of the Hindu art of healing." Levi proceeds to chronicle a visit to Tibet, where Jesus allegedly met Meng-ste, the greatest sage of the East: "And Jesus had access to all the sacred manuscripts, and, with the help of Meng-ste, read them all." Jesus eventually arrived in Egypt, and - in what must be considered a climax of this account of the "lost years" - he joined the "Sacred Brotherhood" at Heliopolis. While there, he passed through seven degrees of initiation - Sincerity, Justice, Faith, Philanthropy, Heroism, Love Divine, and THE CHRIST. The Aquarian Gospel records the bestowal of this highest degree: "The hierophant arose and said, upon your brow I place this diadem, and in the Great Lodge of the heavens and earth you are THE CHRIST. You are a neophyte no more; but God himself will speak, and will confirm your title and degree. And then a voice that shook the very temple said, THIS IS THE CHRIST; and every living creature said, AMEN." Later, following his three-year ministry as THE CHRIST and his subsequent death, Jesus' resurrection is described by Levi in terms of a "transmutation" which all men may accomplish. He made many appearances to people all over the world to substantiate this transmutation. For example, he appeared to the "Silent Brotherhood" in Greece and said: "What I can do all men can do. Go preach the gospel of the omnipotence of man."**

Edgar Cayce, the late American psychic known as "the sleeping prophet" because of his practice of lying down and going into a deep sleep state in order to render a "reading", was known for his psychic revelations of Christ's "missing years". Also from the same article by Dr. Rhodes is the following:

**The person we know as Jesus, Cayce tells us, had 29 previous incarnations: "These included an early sun worshipper, the author of the Book of the Dead, and Hermes, who was supposedly the architect of the Great Pyramid. Jesus was also Zend (the father of**

Zoroaster), Amilius (an Atlantean) and other figures of ancient history." Other incarnations include Adam, Joseph, Joshua, Enoch, and Melchizedek. This particular soul did not become "the Christ" until the thirtieth incarnation - as Jesus of Nazareth. The reason Jesus had to go through so many incarnations is that he - like all other human beings - had "karmic debt" (sin) to work off. Jesus received a comprehensive education. Prior to his twelfth year, he attained a thorough knowledge of the Jewish law. "From his twelfth to his fifteenth or sixteenth year he was taught the prophecies by Judy [an Essene teacher] in her home at Carmel. Then began his education abroad. He was sent first again into Egypt for only a short period, then into India for three years, then into that later called Persia. From Persia he was called to Judea at the death of Joseph, then went into Egypt for the completion of his preparation as a teacher." During his alleged studies abroad, Jesus studied under many teachers (including Kahjian in India, Junner in Persia, and Zar in Egypt), and learned healing, weather control, telepathy, astrology, and other psychic arts. When his education was complete, he went back to his homeland where he performed "miracles" and taught the multitudes for three years.

As we can see from this article, Cayce was New Age to the core despite his proclamation as a follower of Christ. When Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, calmed the storm and foretold the future, Cayce claimed that it was not because he was God but because he had learned these metaphysical techniques from various occult gurus in the East. Many New Agers today cling to this belief.

The most recent book on the topic is **KING OF TRAVELERS** by Edward Martin. Martin was initially influenced by the book **CHRIST IN KASHMIR** by Aziz Kashmiri, which he obtained while in India. Shortly thereafter he met the author and learned much more about the topic than what was included in the book. Martin was also influenced by Edgar Cayce, Levi Dowling and Elizabeth Clare Prophet. Martin and documentary producer Paul Davids have recently filmed the documentary **JESUS IN INDIA**, scheduled to air on the Sundance Channel three times in December 2008 with a DVD release to follow in early 2009. Although I respect his efforts to search for answers to the question of where Jesus was and what he did during the "missing years", Martin has utilized Islamic and New Age resources which will always be at odds with a straightforward reading of the Bible.

### **DID JESUS EVER TRAVEL BEYOND JUDEA?**

We know that Jesus did travel beyond Judea during his lifetime because the Gospels record these excursions for us. With a reference to **HOSEA 11:1**, **MATTHEW 2:13-15** tells the story of how Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, was warned in a dream to take his wife and child to Egypt to escape the wrath of King Herod:

**When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."**

Well into his ministry, Jesus traveled north to the region of Tyre in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) and even further north to Sidon. This was well beyond Galilee in a Canaanite pagan area that was heavily influenced by Greek culture. These were commercially magnificent cities with many of the trappings of modern big-city life, featuring a diversity of religious beliefs and numerous pagan temples. This trip north is recorded for us in **MATTHEW 15:21-28** and **MARK 7:24-30**.

After discussing theology with the learned teachers in the Temple, Jesus returned to Nazareth with his parents, and was "obedient to them" (**LUKE 2:51**). It is possible that Jesus traveled around the known world, but unlikely. It is safe to assume that Jesus spent most, if not all, of his time close to his birthplace studying the scriptures in preparation for his ministry and learning the

trade of carpentry. To say that Jesus traveled all the way to India, Tibet or elsewhere is pure speculation that is based on faulty claims.

## **THE BIG PROBLEM FOR CLAIM #2: THE THEOLOGY OF EASTERN AND PAGAN RELIGIONS IS NOT REPRESENTED IN CHRIST'S TEACHINGS**

It is possible that Jesus traveled to far away lands during the "missing years"...they are, after all, the "missing years". If Jesus did travel to far away lands it is almost certain that he would have learned about the different religions present in those places because his finger was always on the "spiritual pulse" of his surroundings. The real difficulty with this claim, however, is the belief that Jesus melded these different religious teachings into his own personal theology which he later taught in Judea. Judeo-Christian doctrines are simply incompatible with Eastern and pagan beliefs in several core areas. Jesus was not the originator of New Age spirituality, but rather God incarnate who alone provides salvation to a fallen world.

### **CORE BELIEF #1: GOD**

Of all the theological and philosophical issues which exist, none is more basic, and hence more important, than the issue of the existence and nature of God. Several worldview philosophies concerning God exist, such as atheism (the belief that no God exists), pantheism (the belief that God and everything in the universe are one and the same), polytheism (the belief in many gods and goddesses) and monotheism (the belief in one supreme God who is the creator of all things). Hinduism is a blend of pantheism and polytheism. The supreme God of Hinduism is known as Brahma, who is an impersonal spiritual force permeating the universe. Hinduism adheres to the existence of 330 million gods and goddesses, all of which are nothing more than manifestations of the attributes of Brahma. Buddhism is functionally atheistic. Functional atheism is the belief that the existence of God is irrelevant to the process of enlightenment or salvation. Unlike the agnostic who says that no one can know if God exists, the functional atheist says that it does not matter if God exists. Confucius was, according to many sources, an agnostic who focused only on morals and proper behavior, and Lao Tsu, the founder of Taoism, clearly taught pantheism. Zoroaster, the founder of the religion of ancient Persia, taught that there were two equally powerful and opposite gods: the god of good and the god of evil. In theological terms this is known as dualism. The Egyptian, Greco-Roman and Celtic mystery religions were polytheistic and well-steeped in the occult. Therefore, if Jesus studied these various religions in distant lands and then combined their beliefs into his own personal theology, we would expect Jesus to have told the people in Judea about Brahma - who may or may not have existed! - and the many gods and goddesses who are all manifestations of Brahma. Or Jesus might have preached agnosticism. Or maybe he would have talked about the god of goodness and the god of evil. Jesus did not do that, of course, instead telling the people about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - who is separate from creation, unlike the god of pantheism who is indistinguishable from creation. The God of the Bible is clearly not the god of the Eastern or pagan religions. On this basis alone Jesus would have soundly refuted this claim.

### **CORE BELIEF #2: "IN THE BEGINNING"**

The Eastern religions in general as well as the polytheistic religions adhere to the belief in an eternal universe (a universe without a beginning). The Bible, on the other hand, begins with the words "In the beginning..." The question is "Did the universe have a beginning or not?" Strangely enough, we can look to Albert Einstein, who was an atheist in his younger days, for one part of the answer. Formulated by Einstein in 1915, General Relativity is a mathematically proven law of physics which demonstrates that time, space and matter had a simultaneous beginning. That's a major reason why Einstein defected from atheism, because he knew that the Law of Cause and Effect demanded that a beginning must have a Beginner. In unison with this law, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which is also a proven law, states that in an isolated system there will always be a degeneration from a higher state of order to a lower state of order.

In short, the purely natural tendency of things is to move toward chaos rather than order or, to put it another way, the universe is running down, not evolving upward. The logical conclusion is that the universe could not be eternal. These modern scientific discoveries demonstrate that the universe had a beginning and is not eternal, exactly as **GENESIS 1:1** states. Jesus did not speak about the Eastern or polytheistic view of an eternal universe but rather he spoke of a universe with a beginning. **JOHN 1:1-3** is clear that Jesus was the Beginner of the universe.

### **CORE BELIEF #3: SIN / SALVATION / THE AFTERLIFE**

Hinduism and Buddhism hold fast to the concepts of karma and reincarnation, while Judeo-Christianity clearly teaches resurrection which would be unnecessary if karma and reincarnation were true. Karma is the balance of goodness and evil that is contained within a person's soul. If a person dies with an imbalance in favor of evil - due to more evil deeds than good deeds during life - then the person is reborn into another physical body after death so that he or she can have another chance to get rid of the negative karma. Maybe during the next lifetime on earth that person will perform more good deeds than bad deeds, thereby making a favorable dent in the karmic balance. Once a person has erased all of their bad karma, which according to reincarnationists may take numerous lifetimes, then the person may achieve enlightenment which is the union of the soul with the Ultimate Reality (Brahma or God). The Bible clearly teaches that each of us lives one lifetime, and after that the soul continues on either in the presence of God or apart from God. Jesus preached a message of resurrection, not karmic balance and reincarnation, as taught the parable of the "sheep and goats" in **MATTHEW 25:31-46**. If Jesus believed in and taught reincarnation, as do all of the Eastern mystics, there would have been no need for this parable since everyone would eventually enter into union with God. Also refer to **JOHN 9:1-3** and **HEBREWS 9:27** for a Christian refutation of reincarnation.

### **A HINDU REFUTATION OF JESUS IN INDIA**

The following article by V. Jayaram, a Hindu, may be viewed in its entirety at [www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/h\\_christianity.asp](http://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/h_christianity.asp) It is interesting that the author of this article uses three of the same arguments that several Christian researchers use:

**According to one very popular theory, Jesus Christ [is] said to have visited India when he was young and went to the Himalayas after visiting the Gangetic valley. He [is] said to have received spiritual initiation in the Himalayas from some siddhas (spiritual adepts) before he returned to Jerusalem at the age of 34 or 32 and made his presence felt through his miraculous healing powers and powerful speeches. It is further said that he did not die on the cross, but escaped from Jerusalem with the help of his followers and traveled back to India and lived in Kashmir where his grave [is] said to exist till today. While many instances are quoted in support of this theory, the following points makes it difficult to accept this theory:**

- 1. Jesus Christ himself never mentioned anything even remotely about India or Hinduism. None of his disciples ever mentioned anything about it in the Bible.**
- 2. There is practically very little in common between his teachings and the main tenets of Hinduism except in matters of ethics and moral conduct.**
- 3. It is hard believe that Jesus Christ lived in Kashmir, and being a great personality as he is, would have remained silent. He would have definitely made his presence felt in the region through his teachings. Besides it is hard to accept that he would have gone to Kashmir all alone without any of his trusted followers accompanying him.**

### **SUMMARY OF CLAIM #2**

Some Christian writers have declared with confidence that Jesus never went far from Galilee during his lifetime, and that may very well have been true. But in all honesty we simply do not know where Jesus was during all of those years. This claim is really nothing more than an attempt to make Jesus into someone that he never was - namely an Eastern mystic who

preached a message of "finding the god within you", which is the battlecry of New Age spirituality. Whether or not Jesus traveled to distant lands such as India and Tibet is unknown and likely unknowable. What is known - and is really the heart of the matter - is that Jesus did not teach Eastern or pagan beliefs to his followers in Judea. His teachings are a continuation of Old Testament doctrine and not an attempt to synthesize the Old Testament with Eastern and pagan beliefs.

### **CLAIM #3: JESUS SURVIVED THE CRUCIFIXION AND FLED FAR FROM JUDEA, LIVING A VERY LONG LIFE**

Many New Agers, some historical revisionists and even many liberal Christians - those who naturalize the Biblical record and remove any hint of the miraculous - are content to claim that Jesus survived the crucifixion and lived out a long life far from Judea, with India, Japan and the south of France all being proposed destinations. Additionally, Islam teaches that Christ was not crucified but rather a substitute that was divinely made to look like Christ instead hung on the cross. Islamic tradition teaches that this person was either Simon of Cyrene or Judas Iscariot.

#### **ON THE ROAD AGAIN...AND AGAIN...AND AGAIN!**

The following shortened but still extensive passage can be viewed in its entirety at:

[www.sol.com.au/kor/7\\_01.htm](http://www.sol.com.au/kor/7_01.htm)

This is a lengthy synopsis of **JESUS LIVED IN INDIA** by Holger Kersten:

**The Russian scholar Nicolai [Nicholas] Notovich was the first to suggest that Christ may have gone to India. In 1887 Notovich, a Russian scholar and Orientalist, arrived in Kashmir during one of several journeys to the Orient. At the Zoji-la pass Notovich was a guest in a Buddhist monastery, where a monk told him of the bhodisattva saint called "Issa". Notovich was stunned by the remarkable parallels of Issa's teachings and martyrdom with that of Christ's life, teachings and crucifixion. For about sixteen years Christ traveled throughout Turkey, Persia, Western Europe and possibly England. He finally arrived with Mary near Kashmir, where she died. After many years in Kashmir, teaching to an appreciative population who venerated him as a great prophet, reformer and saint, he died and was buried in a tomb in Kashmir itself. The many Islamic and Hindu historical works recording local history and legends of kings, noblemen and saints of the areas thought to be traveled by Jesus also give evidence of a Christ-like man; the Koran, for example, refers to Christ as "Issar". Further east, the Kurdish tribes of Eastern Anatolia have several stories describing Christ's stay in Eastern Turkey after his resurrection. These traditional legends have been ignored by the theological community. Kersten also suggests that prior to Christ's mission in the Middle East, he may have been exposed to Buddhist teachings in Egypt. After his birth in Bethlehem, his family fled to Egypt to avoid Herod's persecution. Surprisingly some scholars now acknowledge that Buddhist schools probably existed in Alexandria long before the Christian era. In tracing Christ's movements to India and beyond, Kersten also discovered that many of his teachings, which have been gradually edited out of the modern Bible, were originally Eastern in nature. Principles such as karma and reincarnation, for example, were common knowledge then and seem to have been reaffirmed by Christ. In his travels through Persia (today's Iran) Christ became known as Yuz Asaf...Kersten claims that there are more than twenty one historical documents that bear witness to the existence of Jesus in Kashmir, where he was known also as Yuz Asaf and Issa. The historian Mullah Nadini recounts a story of Yuz Asaf who was a contemporary to King Gopadatta, and confirms that he also used the name Issar, i.e. Jesus. There is also much historical truth in the towns and villages of northern India to prove that Jesus and his mother Mary spent time in the area. For instance, at the border of a small town called Mari, there is nearby a mountain called Pindi Point, upon which is an old tomb called Mai Mari da Asthan or "The final resting place of Mary". The tomb is said to be very old and local Muslims venerate it as the grave**

of Issa's (i.e. Christ's) mother. The tomb itself is oriented east-west consistent with the Jewish tradition, despite the fact it is within a Muslim area. Assuming its antiquity, such a tomb could not be Hindu either since the Hindus contemporary to Christ cremated their dead and scattered their ashes as do Hindus today. Kersten suggests that Christ may have traveled to southern India also, finally returning to Kashmir to die at the age of approximately 80 years. Christ's tomb, says Kersten, lies in Srinagar's old town in a building called Rozabal. "Rozabal" is an abbreviation of Rauza Bal, meaning "tomb of a prophet". At the entrance there is an inscription explaining that Yuz Asaf is buried along with another Moslem saint. Both have gravestones which are oriented in north-south direction, according to Moslem tradition. However, through a small opening the true burial chamber can be seen, in which the sarcophagus of Yuz Asaf is in an east-west (Jewish) orientation!

### **FROM JERUSALEM TO JAPAN!**

Here is another interesting website concerning the supposed travels of Jesus, in this case all the way to Japan. The website can be found at:

[www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from\\_our\\_own\\_correspondent/5326614.stm](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/5326614.stm)

This website affirms a point that I have always made: Everyone in the past two thousand years - regardless of time, place, culture or religion - seems to take an interest in Jesus and many cultures and religions claim him as their own:

**To reach the grave of Christ, or Kristo no Hakka as it is known locally, you need to head deep into the northern countryside of Japan, a place of paddy fields and apple orchards. Halfway up a remote mountain surrounded by a thicket of bamboo lies a mound of bare earth marked with a large wooden cross. Most visitors peer at the grave curiously and pose in front of the cross for a photograph before heading off for apple ice cream at the nearby cafe. But some pilgrims leave coins in front of the grave in thanks for answered prayers. The cross is a confusing symbol because according to the local legend, Jesus did not die at Calvary. His place was taken by one of his brothers, who for some reason is now buried by his side in Japan. The story goes that after escaping Jerusalem, Jesus made his way across Russia and Siberia to Aomori in the far north of Japan where he became a rice farmer, married, had a family and died peacefully at the age of 114.**

Another interesting tale of Jesus living his "post-crucifixion" life in Japan comes from A.K. Tebecis in the 1982 Japanese book **MAHIKARI: THANK GOD FOR THE ANSWERS AT LAST** (page 358) as related in **JESUS AND THE GODS OF THE NEW AGE** (page 217):

**Christ traveled through many countries teaching and performing all kinds of miracles before arriving in Judea to teach the doctrine formulated in Japan. This provoked the Romans who sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion, but Jesus' brother, Isukiri, voluntarily sacrificed himself on the cross. At the age of 36, Christ went on a four-year journey to northern Europe, Africa, Central Asia, China, Siberia, Alaska, down through both Americas and back to Alaska. He then arrived at Matsugasaki Port in Japan (now part of Hachinohe in Aomori Prefecture) on 26 February in the 33rd year of Suinin, together with many followers from all the countries he had visited on the way. Christ's final years were spent in Herai, where he died at the age of 118.**

I have included these passages from sources which claim Jesus survived the crucifixion and fled Judea so that the reader can become familiar with this unorthodox belief. Although difficult for the devout Christian to read, it can be refuted by remembering one very important point: Christ's death on the cross! This is made clear in the pages of the New Testament, and, along with the resurrection, is the only reasonable explanation for the Christian faith. The claim of a Jesus who survived the cross and traveled far and wide does not sit well with the evidence for the death and resurrection of Christ. Many are content, however, to not let the truth get in the way of a good story!

## **THE BIG PROBLEM FOR CLAIM #3: THE EVIDENCE IS OVERWHELMING THAT JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS**

Jesus could not have fled to India, Japan or anywhere else after a failed crucifixion attempt in Judea simply because the crucifixion was anything but failed.

### **THE SWOON THEORY & THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH**

The so-called "swoon theory" is the idea that Jesus did not die on the cross but rather swooned (fainted) and was only believed to be dead. After being taken down from the cross, he is said to have later revived while in the tomb. There are some major problems with this theory, as outlined in **THE PASSION AND THE EMPTY TOMB** by John Ankerberg and John Weldon (among numerous other resources). The Biblical record makes it clear that a Roman centurion thrust a spear deep into Jesus' side, certainly piercing one or more vital organs and likely the heart itself, which was certain death. The Roman soldiers who specialized in torture and crucifixion were masters of death: They knew a dead man when they saw one. No one who was condemned to die was allowed to survive a crucifixion, and the soldiers prided themselves on their abilities. Besides that, they would themselves be put to death for allowing someone to survive crucifixion. Keep in mind that Jesus had already suffered a severe beating prior to the crucifixion, which alone was enough to kill some men. After being removed from the cross, Jesus was wrapped in as much as 75 pounds of linen, with his arms pinned down to his sides. Additionally, the spice-soaked linen probably had dried after a short time in the grave, turning the linen into a body cast. In his severely weakened state, suffering from severe shock and a significant loss of blood, a not-yet-dead Jesus would have had to escape the confines of the heavy linen, roll a one to two ton stone away from the entrance to the tomb, fight off several Roman guards and walk away on mutilated feet. Not a very likely scenario. In fact, make that impossible.

Islam denies that Jesus even hung on the cross. Surah (chapter) 4:157-159 of the Quran states the following:

**They claim we killed the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, the apostle of God. But they killed him not, nor did they crucify him. They were under the illusion that they had. Those who differ on this matter are full of doubts. They have no real knowledge but follow only conjecture. Assuredly they did not kill him. On the contrary, God raised him to himself, and God is all powerful, all wise.**

The Quran teaches that it was not Jesus who hung on the cross, but rather someone else who was made to look like Jesus. This is because Muslims find it too difficult to believe that God would allow a prophet such as Jesus to die on a cross. An understandable belief, but certainly not in accord with the true mission of Jesus, which was the sacrificial atonement for the sins of all humanity.

### **THE EYEWITNESSES, THE MARTYRS AND BIBLICAL RELIABILITY**

The Biblical record is clear that there were many eyewitnesses who saw the risen Jesus, even as many as 500 at one time (**I CORINTHIANS 15:6**). The Gospels were written well within the lifetime of many of those eyewitnesses, who surely would have refuted the claim that Jesus rose from the dead if it were not true. There was no denial of the resurrection, even in the face of severe persecution, because they knew it was true. They had seen the evidence with their own eyes. Likewise, the apostles with the sole exception of John suffered horrific deaths due to their acceptance of Jesus as Lord and God. They could not deny what they knew to be true, and they knew that Jesus had defeated death and risen from the grave. Many will die for a noble cause, but no one in their right mind will die for a known lie. **MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE** and **JOHN** supply us with reliable historical records of the life of Jesus. The Bible has suffered more ridicule than any other book in history, yet it stands the test of time. When the Gospels describe certain events in the life of Jesus, they do so with the support of archaeology, textual consistency and

prophetic fulfillment.

### **SUMMARY OF CLAIM #3**

Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, atoning for the sins of all mankind. His followers are commanded to go out into the world and tell everyone that good news (**MATTHEW 28:19**). The claim that Jesus survived the crucifixion is simply an attempt to deny the ultimate purpose of Christ.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

If you have never seriously considered the possibility that Jesus is who the Bible claims he is, then I challenge you to study the "Case for Christ" as thoroughly outlined in the first eight books listed below in the FOR FURTHER READING section. Who Jesus was, and is, is simply the most important question that lies before all of us.

### **HOW THE APOSTLE PETER ANSWERED THE QUESTION**

In the beginning of this paper I quoted **MATTHEW 16:13-15**, which asks the question "Who was, and is, Jesus?" In the next verse, the Apostle Peter answers that question correctly:

**Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."**

### **HOW THE APOSTLE THOMAS ANSWERED THE QUESTION**

It has been said that doubt is a healthy thing. If that's the case, then the Apostle Thomas was one very healthy apostle! Many of the disciples who had seen the risen Christ shortly after the resurrection proclaimed this to Thomas, who had not been present to witness this miracle. Thomas doubted the resurrection because he had not seen it with his own eyes. A week later Jesus appeared to Thomas, and as a result Thomas was able to correctly answer the question as well. This is recorded in **JOHN 20:26-28**:

**A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"**

### **HOW DO YOU ANSWER THE QUESTION?**

I once thought of Jesus as only a great teacher and a revolutionary rabbi of his time, but after having searched for answers I have come to the conclusion that Jesus was God incarnate who alone reconciles fallen humanity to Himself. How do you answer the question of who Jesus is? If you are a seeker, one who is not sure what to think, then put any presuppositions you have aside, and let the evidence lead where it may. Please refer to the first eight books that are listed below for answers. Godspeed on your spiritual journey, and I hope your destination culminates in finding the true Christ.

## **RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY**

### **FOR GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE CASE FOR THE DIVINITY OF JESUS**

1. **THE PASSION AND THE EMPTY TOMB.** John Ankerberg & John Weldon. 2005. **A basic but concise case for the resurrection of Jesus, with an appendix on the Greco-Roman mystery religions and the claim that they influenced Christianity.**
2. **THE SEARCH FOR MESSIAH.** Mark Eastman & Chuck Smith. 1996. **How the Dead Sea Scrolls and ancient rabbinical writings point to Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah.**

3. **THE JESUS INQUEST.** Charles Foster. 2006.

The case for - and against - the resurrection of Jesus. Examines the claim that Christianity borrowed from the Greco-Roman mystery religions and the claim that Jesus survived the crucifixion and traveled to a far away land.

4. **JESUS: THE GREAT DEBATE.** Grant Jeffrey. 1999.

A great book with an emphasis on the archaeology and prophecy pointing to the divinity of Christ.

5. **C.S. LEWIS'S CASE FOR CHRIST.** Art Lindsley. 2005.

An indepth consideration of C.S. Lewis's arguments for the divinity of Jesus, featuring some unique ideas not often presented in other books on the topic.

6. **EVIDENCE FOR JESUS.** Ralph Muncaster. 2004.

Explores the usual evidences for the divinity of Jesus but also has excellent material on non-Biblical historical records as well as the evidence from early Christian martyrs.

7. **THE CASE FOR CHRIST.** Lee Strobel. 1998.

This is the modern classic on the evidence for Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah.

8. **THE CASE FOR THE REAL JESUS.** Lee Strobel. 2007.

This is the best refutation against the atheistic, New Age and liberal Christian claims of who Jesus was. This book contains a very detailed examination of the false link between the Greco-Roman mystery religions and Christianity.

### **FOR AN EXAMINATION OF THE DIFFICULT SAYINGS OF JESUS**

**WHAT DID JESUS MEAN? MAKING SENSE OF THE DIFFICULT SAYINGS OF JESUS.** Ron Rhodes. 1999.

Explores the curious and controversial sayings of Jesus that many have twisted to suit their own agenda. Pages 77-79 addresses the New Age claim that Jesus taught Eastern beliefs with the statements "...I have said you are gods" (John 10:34) and "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

### **FOR AN EXAMINATION OF CONTROVERSIAL CLAIMS ABOUT CHRIST**

1. **JESUS: FACT AND FICTION.** Robert Bowman (Principal Author) and Paul Carden (General Editor). 2008.

A short fold-out resource from Rose Publishing which is an excellent examination of 10 controversial claims about Jesus including the claims that Jesus never existed and that Jesus was trained by gurus in the East.

2. **JESUS AND THE GODS OF THE NEW AGE.** Ross Clifford & Philip Johnson. 2003.

Has an excellent chapter on the "missing years" of Jesus as well as the claim that Jesus survived the cross and escaped to a distant land.

3. **AVOIDING JESUS.** Michael Green. 2005.

Answers to difficult questions for people who deny Jesus and the Christian faith.

4. **SEARCHING FOR THE REAL JESUS IN AN AGE OF CONTROVERSY.** Douglas Groothuis. 1996.

Similar to JESUS AND THE GODS OF THE NEW AGE, this book explores how the New Age has distorted the real Jesus. CHAPTER 7: THE LOST YEARS OF JESUS and CHAPTER 8: DID JESUS TRAVEL TO INDIA? are especially significant to this study.

5. **THE JESUS WHO NEVER LIVED.** H. Wayne House. 2008.

The subtitle says it all: EXPOSING FALSE CHRISTS AND FINDING THE REAL JESUS. In my opinion this is the best resource on the topic of examining the question of who Jesus really is.

6. **CONSPIRACIES AND THE CROSS.** Timothy Paul Jones. 2008.

Once again the subtitle says it all: HOW TO INTELLIGENTLY COUNTER THE TEN MOST POPULAR THEORIES THAT ATTACK THE GOSPEL OF JESUS.

7. **SLANDERING JESUS.** Erwin Lutzer. 2007.

Explores six lies that people tell about Jesus.

8. **THE COUNTERFEIT CHRIST OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT.** Ron Rhodes. 1991.

A book similar to JESUS AND THE GODS OF THE NEW AGE and SEARCHING FOR THE REAL JESUS IN AN AGE OF CONTROVERSY. The claim that Jesus traveled to India and

elsewhere is fully explored.

9. **DID JESUS GO TO INDIA AS A CHILD AND LEARN FROM HINDU GURUS?** Ron Rhodes. Web address:

[www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/rfsm-guru.html](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/rfsm-guru.html)

This article addresses the same question as above, but is much more brief.

10. **PART 1: THE CHRIST OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT.** Ron Rhodes. Web address:

[www.ronrhodes.org/ChristNAM.html](http://www.ronrhodes.org/ChristNAM.html)

A great introduction to how Jesus is viewed by New Age proponents.

11. **PART II: THE JESUS OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT.** Ron Rhodes. Web address:

[www.ronrhodes.org/JesusNAM.html](http://www.ronrhodes.org/JesusNAM.html)

The follow-up to the previous resource, this article directly addresses the matter of Jesus traveling to foreign lands in his youth for the purpose of studying Eastern religions.

### **FOR AN EXAMINATION OF HOW JESUS COMPARES TO THE FOUNDERS OF OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS**

1. **BUT DON'T ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD?** Michael Green. 2002.

A short book that demonstrates how Jesus radically differs from the founders of other religions or philosophies.

2. **CHRIST AMONG OTHER GODS.** Erwin Lutzer. 1994.

Very similar to the previous book but much more material is covered.

3. **JESUS AMONG OTHER GODS.** Ravi Zacharias. 2000.

Considered by many to be the modern classic regarding how Christian thought compares to the beliefs of other religions.

### **FOR AN EXAMINATION OF THE BELIEFS OF OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS**

1. **THE COMPACT GUIDE TO WORLD RELIGIONS.** Dean Halverson. 1996.

Covers the beliefs of the major world religions.

2. **SO WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?** Fritz Ridenour. 2001.

Very similar to the previous book with the addition of covering several more religions.

3. **IN SEARCH OF THE TRUE LIGHT.** Mike Shreve. 2006.

Written by a former New Age teacher, this is the best book regarding how Christianity is similar to, and different from, several major and minor religions with an emphasis on New Age spirituality.

### **FOR AN EXAMINATION OF THE CLAIM THAT CHRISTIANITY BORROWED FROM PAGAN RELIGIONS**

1. **THE GOSPEL AND THE GREEKS: DID THE NEW TESTAMENT BORROW FROM PAGAN THOUGHT?** Ronald Nash. 1992.

The single best book on the claimed relationship between Hellenism, the Greco-Roman mystery religions and Gnosticism, showing that Christianity did not borrow from any of these ideas but rather just the opposite is the case.

2. **THE GNOSTIC EMPIRE STRIKES BACK.** Peter Jones. 2006.

An excellent introductory examination of the Gnostic threat to Christianity and how Gnosticism exists today in the form of New Age spirituality.

### **FOR AN EXAMINATION OF THE DA VINCI CODE (AN IDEA RELATED TO THE THIRD CLAIM IN THIS PAPER)**

1. **BREAKING THE DA VINCI CODE.** Darrell Bock. 2004.

One of the two best books on the topic by a well-respected author and scholar.

2. **CRACKING DA VINCI'S CODE.** James Garlow & Peter Jones. 2004.

James Garlow is a well-respected Christian/church historian and Peter Jones is an expert on the topic of Gnosticism and how that belief system ties into the Da Vinci Code claims.

## FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE LEGEND OF THE APOSTLE THOMAS IN PERSIA AND INDIA

**THE SEARCH FOR THE TWELVE APOSTLES.** William Steuart McBirnie. 1973.

A great study concerning what happened to the twelve apostles and Paul after the ascension of Christ. The legends of their martyrdom are fully explored.

## FOR INFORMATION ABOUT CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

1. **DEFENDING YOUR FAITH.** Dan Story. 1997.

This book has excellent chapters on the reliability of the Bible and also how reincarnation is incompatible with Christianity, including a refutation of the claim that the Bible teaches reincarnation.

2. **THE BIBLE: A MESSAGE FROM GOD.** Lee Johnson. 2008. Web address:

[www.mybethel.com/images/lee%2012208.pdf](http://www.mybethel.com/images/lee%2012208.pdf)

This is an excellent resource on why we can trust the ancient documents known to us as the Holy Bible.

## RESOURCES FROM THOSE WHO BELIEVE JESUS LIVED IN INDIA

1. **DID JESUS VISIT INDIA?** Len Kasten. **Atlantis Rising** September / October 2006 (#59).

A great resource from the perspective of one who believes Jesus spent time in India and Tibet.

2. [www.tombofjesus.com](http://www.tombofjesus.com)

For extensive research of the claim that Jesus lived in India and his tomb is still there to this day.

I include the above two resources only because some people like to explore topics from different points of view. This magazine article and website can be difficult for the Christian reader, however, because of the non-Christian claims that are made. We live in a world of vastly different beliefs, and if Christians are going to respond to the questions or accusations of non-Christians then it is in their best interests to "know where others are coming from" so that they can enter into dialogue more effectively. People who believe that Jesus was a world traveler who studied with Eastern mystics are not the enemies of Christianity and Christians should not fear speaking with them. They are simply curious about Jesus, as we all are. They need to be made aware of the evidence for the Jesus described in the Bible.