



Jesus the Man: Decoding the Real Story of Jesus and Mary Magdalene

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Jesus was the leader of a radical faction of Essene priests. He was not of virgin birth. He did not die on the Cross. He married Mary Magdalene, fathered a family, and later divorced. He died sometime after AD 64.

In this controversial version of Christ's life, theological scholar and bestselling author Barbara Thiering presents, after more than twenty years of close study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospels, a revolutionary theory that, while upholding the fundamental faith of Christianity, challenges many of its most ingrained supernaturalist beliefs.

Jesus the Man will undoubtedly surprise those for whom a traditional understanding of biblical history is immutable and unchallengeable. But for the throngs who have been fascinated by new interpretations of this history, Thiering's work will be an essential and thrilling read.

Jesus the Man: Decoding the Real Story of Jesus and Mary Magdalene Details

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Author : Barbara Thiering

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From Reader Review Jesus the Man: Decoding the Real Story of Jesus and Mary Magdalene for online ebook

Dave says

Makes for interesting reading. A well presented hypothesis, which if true puts a completely different slant on the historical accuracy of the New Testament. However, I think it fills in alot of information that just isn't there to support itself. Still worth a read if you are interested in this kind of thing.

whynnot says

it's a refreshing interpretation of the new testament. after years of christian religious indoctrination it takes a while to accept this new view though. it makes good work of its subtitle - decoding the real story of jesus and mary magdalene

Stuart says

Not sure about this! She is either a very clever academic who has reinterpreted the bible or a complete con. She claims to use the Dead Sea Scrolls to decode what the New Testament period really means. She has 'evidence' in not only the fragments of writing but also in the remnants of Qumran which she claims was really where most of the events were happening including the 'crucifixion'. In her version, Joseph is nearly the 'king', Jesus got married off to Mary Magdalene and the various Jewish/Christian factions were at each others' throats. Not clear at the end where Jesus fitted in to the whole story - he seems to be relegated after he escapes death to a figurehead.

The book is split in two - the first 225 pages set out the plot while the remaining 300 pages provides the factual back up! So it is an 'easy' read - though the warring factions and the multiple names for each character did confuse me! I will have to find out a bit more about the author -after all the book was written 20 years ago!

Charbel says

I did not like this book for a couple of reasons. The first is that I found the writing to be quite insipid, as it took a lot of effort to keep reading it. I had to push myself to not give up on it, and when I finally finished it I realized that I had wasted too much of my time on it. The second reason is that Barbara Thiering was not able to convince me with her theory. I consider myself an open minded person, in fact I'm a bit too open minded, yet I found the material in this book to be absolute rubbish. I definitely would not recommend this book to anyone, not even to atheists.

Sean Harding says

Total rubbish almost gnostic in its approach and execution by the author who says they have the secret knowledge to understand the scripture, and then read things into it that just are not there I read it as apart of an essay back in college, and I remember thinking what total hogwash.

Isobel says

I picked this up primarily because Laurence Gardiner cited it as a source so often in "Bloodline of the Holy Grail". Thiering managed to turn a subject that I find completely fascinating into something I found I couldn't finish. Despite really wanting to read this book, it was so desperately boring, I gave it up as a bad job. It ended up in a charity donation bag in an international move. Definitely not worth shipping! If I saw it as a very cheap ebook, or at the library, I might give it another shot. Maybe.

Paul says

This technical, meticulous, expository work of New Testament scholarship is the elephant in the room for all who wish to believe that the gospels are literal documents that portray events that actually happened as described.

My introduction to the idea that Jesus survived the Crucifixion (apart from seeing Ray Bradbury spitball a scenario for it on a TV talk show in the 1970s) was in 1994 when I read *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln, a book subsequently made even more famous in the frenzy around Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. It was July in the Colorado Rockies, on one of two days off during an 11-week Buddhist seminary, and while other students were off hiking or making town trips, I spent the hot afternoon in the great dining-tent, hunched over my paperback. I knew I should stop reading, but I couldn't. The idea that Jesus had not only survived, but had had children to perpetuate the royal dynasty of Israel--a dynasty that has survived--was too electrifying.

Fast-forward to January 1996. I was perusing my local bookstore (an excellent place run by a Korean couple, now long gone, alas), when what should I find but this book by Barbara Thiering. As soon as I realized what it was about, I knew I had to have it. I bought it, started reading, and again became electrified.

Many theories and stories exist about Jesus: Did he really exist? Was he really God incarnate? Was he actually crucified? Under what circumstances? And so on. What sets Thiering's work apart from other alternative theories of Jesus is the nature of her evidence. Her main source is the gospels themselves (along with Acts of the Apostles and Revelation), but read in a new way. Thiering's central contention is that the gospels, Acts, and Revelation are all documents of a particular type: documents intended to have what was called a *peshet*, which is Hebrew for "interpretation" or "solution" in the sense of solving a puzzle. They were all written carefully, deliberately, in a kind of code that was intended to conceal a literal, factual meaning behind the surface text, a code readable only to someone with special knowledge. That factual meaning is a history of the events leading up to the birth of what came to be a new religion, the one we now call Christianity.

The books of the New Testament were originally written in Greek, unlike the books of the Old Testament,

which were written in Hebrew (except for the Book of Daniel, which was written at least partly in Aramaic). Scholars have supposed that the awkwardness of the Greek is due to the imperfect command of the language on the part of the New Testament authors, but Thiering denies this. On closer inspection, there is method in the seeming solecisms of the text. The apparently inaccurate use of plurals, pronouns, and gender arises from the rigorous application of this method of coding. There was nothing wrong with the authors' Greek; their "clumsiness" is actually just our own ignorance of the texts' real nature and purpose. Modern Bible scholars are among the exoteric group that was never intended to understand the hidden meanings in these documents.

Although I've read all of Barbara Thiering's books and have studied her website, I don't recall her ever explaining exactly how she developed this theory. It has been presented from the start as something already worked out. However, as presented, it is rigorously consistent and clearly the result of a huge amount of study and labor. To lay hold of the full meaning of these texts, Thiering had to become conversant with, among other things, the details of the solar calendar used by the sectarians who composed the texts--a calendar that was complex and that kept changing as different viewpoints arose. I mention this because I've done some study of calendars myself, and so I appreciate the quantity and caliber of effort involved here, and it is a lot. Everything else has been examined at a similar level of detail.

And what is the secret story underlying the gospels? Very briefly: Jesus was indeed a real person, and was indeed a dynast of the royal house of David. By the 1st century BC the David lineage had become attached to the group known as the Essenes, educated sectarians who had become alienated from the mainstream of Judean society in the aftermath of the Maccabean revolt and the ensuing reformation of the Jewish state. The Essenes were centered at Qumran by the Dead Sea, and this monastic environment is where many of the events of the gospels actually took place--including the Crucifixion. For Jesus was indeed crucified, along with two others: Simon Magus and Judas Iscariot. Jesus did survive the Crucifixion, and, with his wife Mary Magdalene, did have children. He did teach a new understanding of the Law, and remained active in the movement to bring this to the world. His date of death is not recorded, but it apparently happened in Rome when he was in his 70s.

There is much more to this story, and a great deal of context. Thiering tries to give all this, but there are problems with providing so much information of different kinds in a single accessible book. She sketches in the story in the first 214 pages; the remaining 400 pages is a set of appendixes giving details about things like the sectarians' complex hierarchy and their understanding of time and space. About 100 pages is a detailed chronology of events based on an exact pesher of the documents. But it's not a narrative; the tone is scholarly and scientific, and this I think is a weakness in a book aimed at the mass market.

There's much more to this book than I can give a sense of here--to say nothing of its implications. The book provoked enormous controversy when it was first published. I recall reading a dismissive review by Bible and Dead Sea Scrolls scholar Geza Vermes, and how Thiering had to point out certain large errors he had made in his review. It was as though he didn't want to waste mental energy on such a crackpot idea, and no doubt many other scholars feel the same way about Thiering's theory.

But it is a theory--not merely a hypothesis. It is worked out and, Thiering maintains, fully testable. The problem is that you need to be able to read ancient Greek in order to play, which makes this the preserve of Bible scholars or, maybe, some enterprising classical studies student. And Bible scholars, still comfortable with their paradigm, don't see any need to go shopping for a new one. They're more or less satisfied with their existing "explanations" for why the gospels' Greek is so mangled, for why the gospels are so different in content and in outlook, for why the authors seemed not to know how big the Sea of Galilee was or how long it took to make certain journeys. People were just dumber then.

People weren't dumber then. People, possibly, are dumber now. When I read this book I became convinced that it is a landmark in intellectual history. It has its weaknesses: it is a very technical work, and Thiering is no prose stylist. But Barbara Thiering has what no other Bible scholar now has: the right paradigm. I have no doubt that this will become the dominant paradigm for New Testament scholarship. It may take 20 years, or it may take 200, but this way of looking at the New Testament brings it into sharp focus. In the future, young researchers, if they are exposed to both paradigms and if they are not biased by religious faith, will choose this one. The image of semiliterate fishermen writing stories long after the event will be dropped.

As for Christianity itself, well, who knows. Thiering tries to minimize the impact that her theory might have on Christian faith by pointing to the importance of what Jesus actually taught, which remains intact. This to me seems naive. For as Joseph Campbell observed, if the events in the Bible are no longer seen as factual, then the Bible becomes simply a work of poetry like any other, with no greater authority than any other. Thiering's work shows that the New Testament *does* present a factual narrative, but that this narrative is hidden behind a fabulous screen. And for all these centuries the fabulous screen is what we've taken for fact. In this we are not to blame, for the texts were *designed* that way. The factual content was intended to be secret. But now, finally, thanks to Barbara Thiering, that secret has come to light. And whatever the implications are for Christianity or for the world generally, I find it very exciting. And if you believe in divine providence, then you too must believe that it's an idea whose time has come.

Kathleen Dixon says

I actually found this book very boring. The unfortunate thing is that her premise is such old news now that it was neither shocking nor exciting. And her writing style is very dull.

Who knows? She may be right. Though there are other ways of looking at the biblical stories that are more satisfying and still manage to bring the "miracles" into reality. I've never had any interest in seeing the stories literally, but I do like to believe that something spiritual rather than political was what happened way back then.

Robert Conway says

This book is kind of hard to get thru, but there are some very interesting elements of evidence and some possibly startling conclusions presented. Worth a try if reader is serious in discovering what may have actually accured. This work may offend those who are devout in Christian faith !

David says

Book Description

DECODING THE REAL STORY OF JESUS AND MARY MAGDALENE

Jesus was the leader of a radical faction of Essene priests. He was not of virgin birth. He did not die on the

Cross. He married Mary Magdalene, fathered a family, and later divorced. He died sometime after AD 64. This controversial version of Christ's life is not the product of a mind which wants to debunk Christianity. Barbara Thiering is a theologian and a biblical scholar. But after over twenty years of close study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospels she has developed a revolutionary new theory which, while upholding the fundamental faith of Christianity, challenges many of its most ingrained supernaturalist beliefs.

Jesus the Man will undoubtedly upset and even outrage those for whom Christianity is immutable and unchallengeable. But for many who have found the rituals of the contemporary church too steeped in medieval thinking, it will provide new insights into Christianity in the context of the 1990s.

About the Author

Barbara Thiering:

Dr Barbara Thiering was a lecturer at the University of Sydney's Divinity School for 22 years until she recently retired. She has published widely on this subject, for which she has an international and controversial reputation. Her books include Jesus the Man, Jesus of the Apocalypse and The Book That Jesus Wrote. She lives in Sydney and has a grown family.

Bradley McCann says

I read bits and pieces of this book, and found some parts fascinating.

Richard Worden says

A very detailed speculation by Dr. Thiering who follows her hypothesis that Jesus survived the cross. This book challenges many ideas about the New Testament.

Dr. M says

The author Barbara Thiering was a Bible Scholar who worked for Australian Television. She bases this book on the actual recorded evidences in the parchments generally known as "Dead Sea Scrolls". This book claims that the life and work of Jesus Christ are available in recorded history, and she gives a detailed account of it with references to every claim. An unbiased reader becomes a greater admirer of Jesus Christ who was a revolutionary and social reformer, but it would shock those who attribute divinity to Jesus and believe that he ascended to Heavens from the Cross. The book reveals a lot about Bible and the "Peshier" scheme in which it was written, hiding facts that could be easily decoded. It is a very interesting book.

Paul Mannering says

The fun thing about religion is you can convince people to believe almost anything and claim it is truth. It's a bit ironic to read a book that says here is the "real" Jesus. I think it's quite likely that he did live in the way

described, pursued a career as a political activist and then died in comfortable obscurity in Rome circa 64AD.

What upsets people is the simple explanations of supposed miracles, but Occams Razor suggests that things are simpler than we might want them to be - so the explanations of the miracles touched on make far more sense than "god did it."

Willa Powell says

I have a 1992 hardcover edition published by Doubleday. My guess is the listing here is a later edition of same. I'm not sold on the theory that Jesus was a member of the Essene sect, but it was an interested read, if not compelling.
