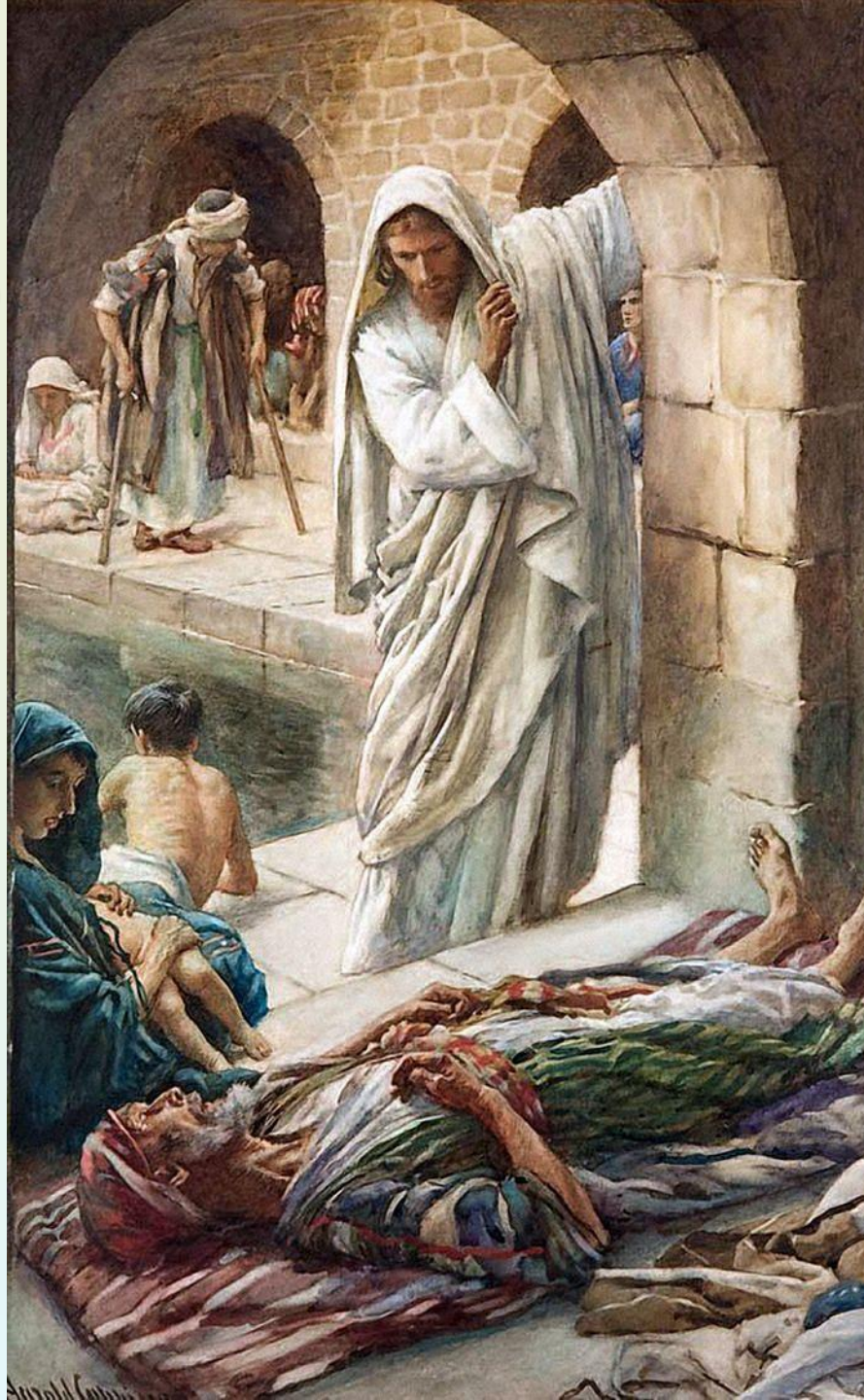


The Measure of Hardheadedness? John 5:43-47

*“Jesus Heals the
Lame Man At the
Pool of Bethesda”
by Harold
Copping, 1907*



John Chapter
5 challenges
us with
several
questions
that require
us to confront
who Jesus
really is and
who we really
are. Garrison COG

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The story of the healing of lame man by the pool of Bethesda in John 5 is intentionally set parallel to the healing of the blind man in John 9. The fact that the event and the aftermath take up the discussion of the full chapter in both cases is a clue to the importance of these 2 events in John's Gospel. They are parallel in a number of respects.

The Parallels:

- Both take place in Jerusalem
- Both healings involve pools of water in contrasting ways.
- One person feels no real need for healing. The other is born blind and desires healing.
- One is guilty of sin, the other is not.



"The Blind Man is Healed at the Pool of Siloam by Harold Copping, 1910

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The Parallels continue:

- One is unconcerned about who Jesus is, the other is committed to who Jesus is.
- Both bring the negative attention from Jewish leaders.
- Confrontations result focused on the nature of who Jesus is.
- These confrontations escalate in the one case between Jesus and the Jewish leaders and in the other between the blind man and the Pharisees.
- Jesus seeks out both men following the event.

Both stories indicate the central question of John's Gospel:
Who is Jesus and what am I going to do about it?



“The Blind Man is Healed at the Pool of Siloam by Harold Copping, 1910

43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

44 How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.

47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

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“Hard Headedness” can have either a positive connotation, where we laud a person for their pragmatism and determination.

Or a negative one where we reflect on a person’s stubborn prideful insistence in spite of clear evidence to the contrary.

These 2 accounts reflect on both types of persons. In John 5 we have the prideful stubborn Jewish leaders who will not yield to the evidence of the miracle, the witness of Scripture or the soundness of reason.

In John 9 we have the former blindman who is fully convinced of the goodness of Jesus and his power and stands up to withering criticism, personal attacks and shunning by the Pharisees.



“The Blind Man is Healed at the Pool of Siloam by Harold Copping, 1910

The Measure of Hardheadedness? John 5:43-47

Christians were among the earliest people to use “Codices” or “books”. P52 is a page from a book. It reflects some important things:

- John’s gospel was already established as authoritative literature within 50 years of its writing.
- The text of the fragment reflects the accuracy of the transmission of the Greek text.
- Care was taken in the transmission of the text.
- John’s gospel which has the most to say about Jesus’ Divinity is very early in Christian thinking.



The Ryland Papyrus P52. Discovered in Egypt in 1920, was translated and dated in 1939. It is John 18:31-33 on one side and 37-38 on the other. The date set for for it is around AD 140. Most textual scholars now agree with this date. This places this copy within 50 years of the the writing of John’s gospel according to Christian tradition [AD 90-100].

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The Measure of Hardheadedness? John 5:43-47

With the Enlightenment that followed the upheaval of the Reformation in Europe a skepticism grew about religious beliefs. By the late 1600's there was open skepticism to the Christian faith. A century later skepticism had so captured academic pursuits that many of the leading academics were openly skeptical about the Divinity of Jesus and the miraculous claims of scripture. This movement grew in intensity until many believed that Jesus was little more than a mythological figure or at the very least a legendary figure built around a well meaning Jewish prophet.



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The church's belief in Jesus' divinity and his resurrection were viewed as Roman mythology that infected the church. Many believed that the Gospel accounts were written centuries after the time of Jesus by people who had little knowledge of the events and filled in the gaps with Roman mythology.

Psalm 103:6-12



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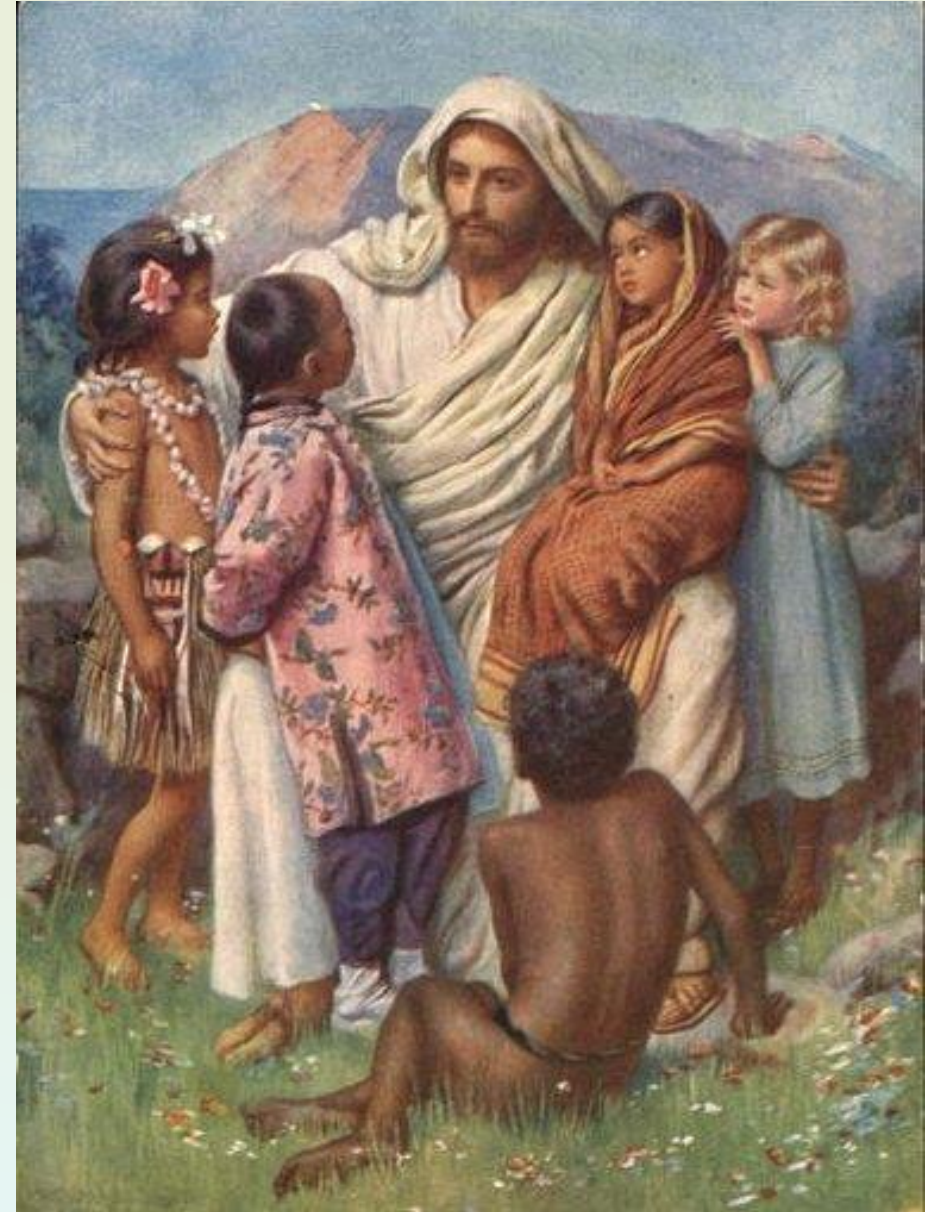
- 6 The LORD executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed.
- 7 He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.
- 8 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.
- 9 He will not always strive *with us*, Nor will He keep *His anger* forever.
- 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;
- 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

The Measure of Hardheadedness? John 5:43-47

The belief of the age was that Christianity had created the Divinity of Jesus out of the struggles leading up to the Council of Nicaea in 325. Where the Divinity of Jesus was established as Christian doctrine and the concept of the Trinity created to explain Jesus' divinity and the physical resurrection used as justification of the doctrine.

This continued throughout the 1800's until the study of the early Church Fathers writings proved that the doctrines and New Testament went further back into Christian history than believed.

Christianity was not the creation of the 4th century councils but instead the councils reflected doctrine going back to the earliest days of Christian belief.



*“Jesus Hope of the World,”
Harold Copping, 1915*

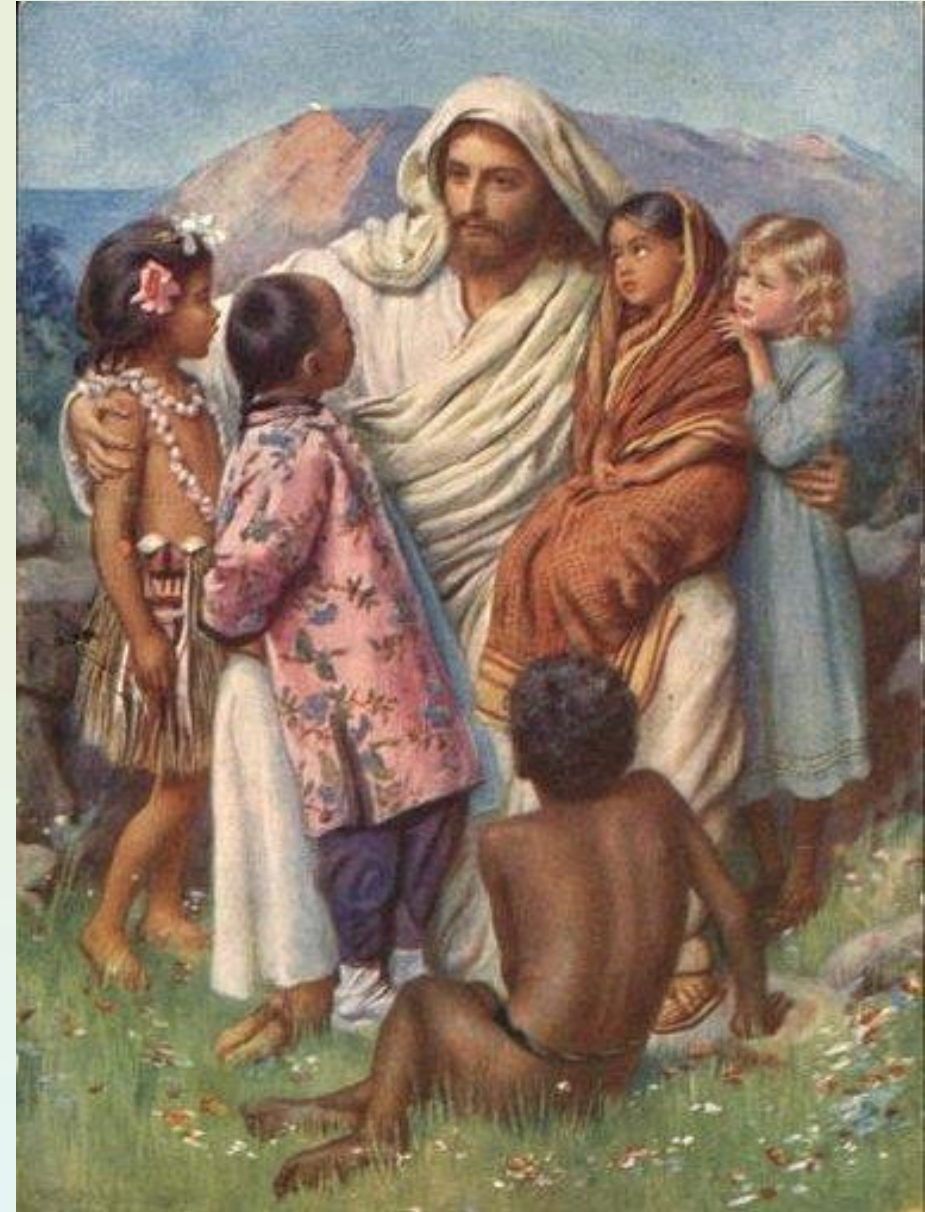
The Measure of Hardheadedness? John 5:43-47

Jesus challenged the Jewish leaders with the witness of the Father. He states that his ability to do miracles and good works is clear testimony of God's power at work in him and the approval of his statements about himself.

According to Jewish Law there needed to be 2 witnesses to establish fact. Jesus calls upon Moses the founder of the Jewish faith as his corroborating witness. In addition, Jesus claims that God is his father in a unique way that is not metaphorical but real.

It is easy to miss the startling nature of this series of statements. Jesus is claiming to not only be the Messiah but also the promised Savior of the world. He cites Moses as his witness to this effect.

Deuteronomy 18:15-22



*“Jesus Hope of the World,”
Harold Copping, 1915*

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Deuteronomy 18:15-22 [ESV]

15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,

16 “according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’

17 “And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good.

18 ‘I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

19 ‘And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him.

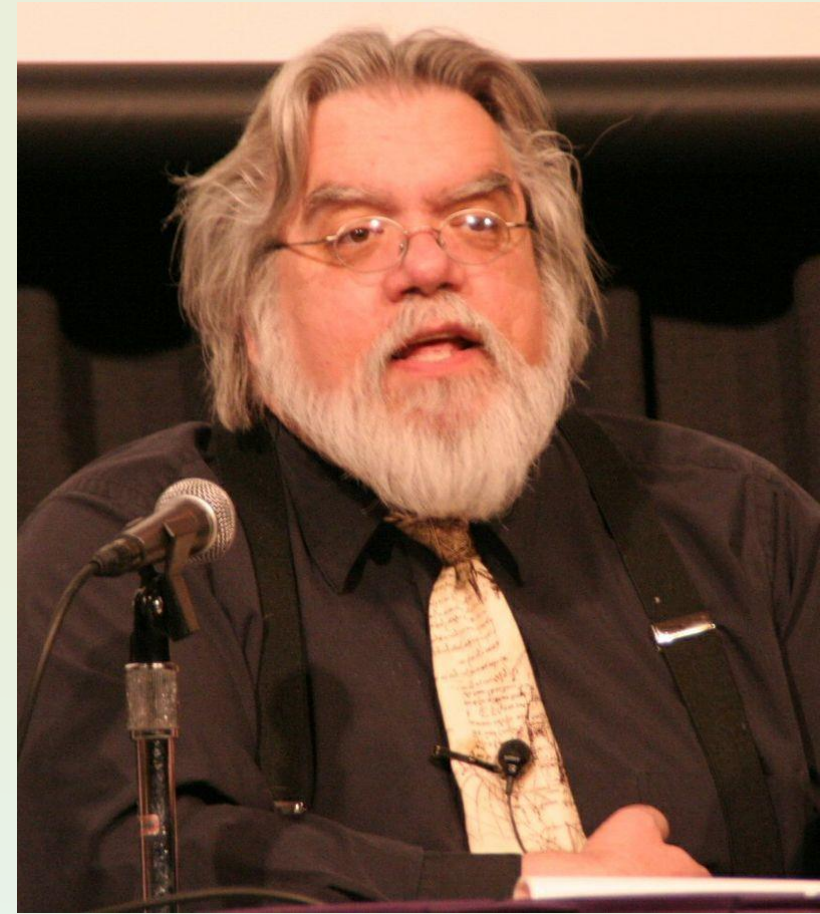
The Measure of Hardheadedness? John 5:43-47

In the mid 1800s the emphasis shifted to Paul as a Hellenistic Jew who corrupted the simple Jesus cult, turning it from a sect that honored a simple prophet Jesus into a Hellenistic Savior cult that worshiped Jesus. In this view the Gospels were written after Paul's writings and reflected this new cult that Paul had created. By early 1900s this scholarly approach became known as "The Quest For The Historical Jesus"

In the early 1900s archeology began to confirm the details recorded in the gospels about geography, cultural practices and political circumstances in the 1st century.

In addition many ancient manuscripts thought lost began to surface. This information proved that the Gospel writers were either Jews or close associates of Jewish people and had a clear understanding of Palestine in the early 1st century. This became especially clear in the case of John's Gospel.

Knowing Who Jesus Is – John 5



*Robert M. Price, Theologian
agnostic/atheist sceptic
Leading Proponent of the
"Christ Myth Theory"*

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The Measure of Hardheadedness? John 5:43-47

The evidence is so compelling that that no serious scholar doubts that Jesus lived or made the claims that he made. His crucifixion is not doubted. Scholars don't even seriously doubt his disciples believed he had been physically resurrected. A small rabid group of scholars hold to "Christ Myth Theory" led by Theologian and Journalist Robert M. Price who once was a Baptist minister and renounced his Christian faith. He and a handful of radical agnostic/atheist conspiracy theorists opine online their view that Jesus is a myth. By the 1970's the search for "The Quest for the Historical Jesus" was seriously discredited. In 1985, a group of academics joined to together to form the "Jesus Seminar" under the influence of skeptic Robert W. Funk. These scholars would gather to vote on what they considered authentic in the Gospel accounts. The process became so slip shod that it lost any credibility.

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Harold Copping in 1913

Knowing Who Jesus Is – John 5

Harold Copping is not considered an innovative Biblical artist. Yet he was a devout Christian that took the Biblical narrative seriously. When he looked at John's description in John 5 and John 9 of a "pool" he noted the Greek word was used of a "swimming pool" size structure. At the time most people believed that The pool of Bethesda and the Pool of Siloam were shallow pond like structures. He painted them as swimming pool size structures. In 1964 The Pool of Bethesda was discovered where John described its location and its 5 portico structure and it was indeed a swimming pool structure. The Pool of Siloam was discovered in 2005 and fit exactly John's description.

Harold Copping resisted the modernist pressure to discount the narrative accounts in the Gospels, as a result his work has held up. Deuteronomy

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Deuteronomy 5:2-7 [ESV]

1 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who *are* here today, all of us who *are* alive. 4 The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. 5 I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. *He* said:

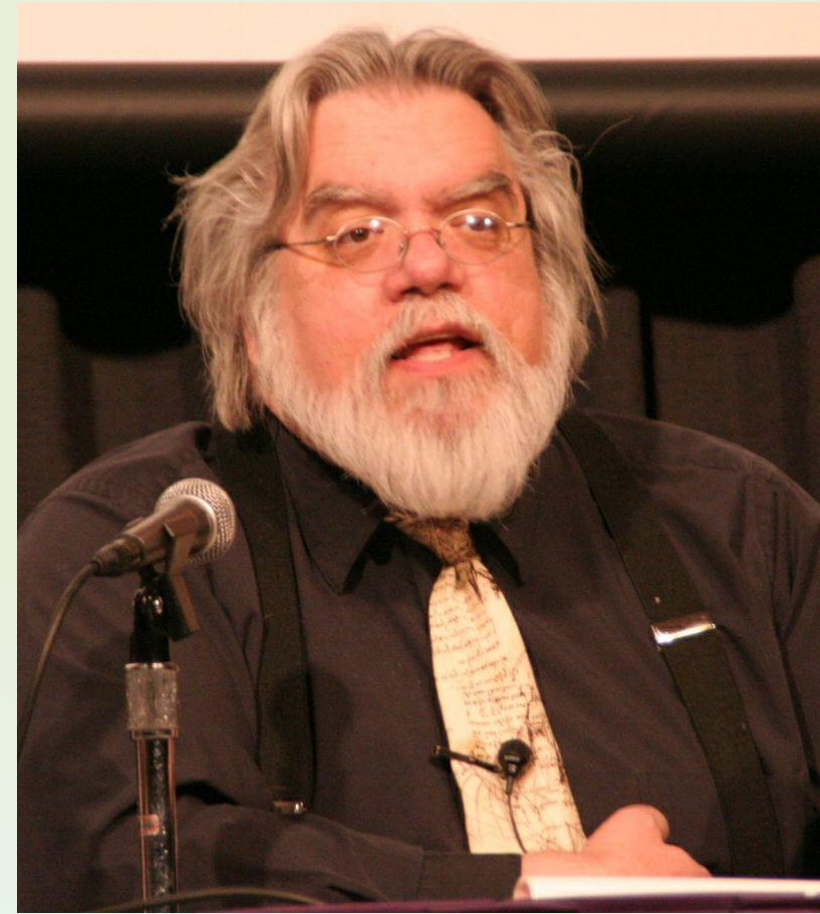
6 ‘*I am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 7 You shall have no other gods before Me.

The Measure of Hardheadedness? John 5:43-47

In 2007, agnostic R. Joseph Hoffmann tried to establish the “Jesus Project” to correct the failures of the Jesus Seminar. They had one conference in 2009 after which they dissolved due to internal squabbles about structure. Robert M. Price led a group of radical scholars that tried gain dominance for the “Christ Myth Theory” in the discussions. The vast majority of scholars could not accept their positions.

In 1994 a 1st century tomb [Talpiot tomb] was discovered in Jerusalem. One of the people buried there was named “Jesus Of Joseph”. Others in the tomb had familiar 1st century names. The discovery though fascinating was discounted quickly by archeologists because the names “Jesus” and “Joseph” were among the most common male names in 1st Century Judaism. But in 2009 a book was written which proposed that this was the “The Jesus Family Tomb”.

Knowing Who Jesus Is – John 5



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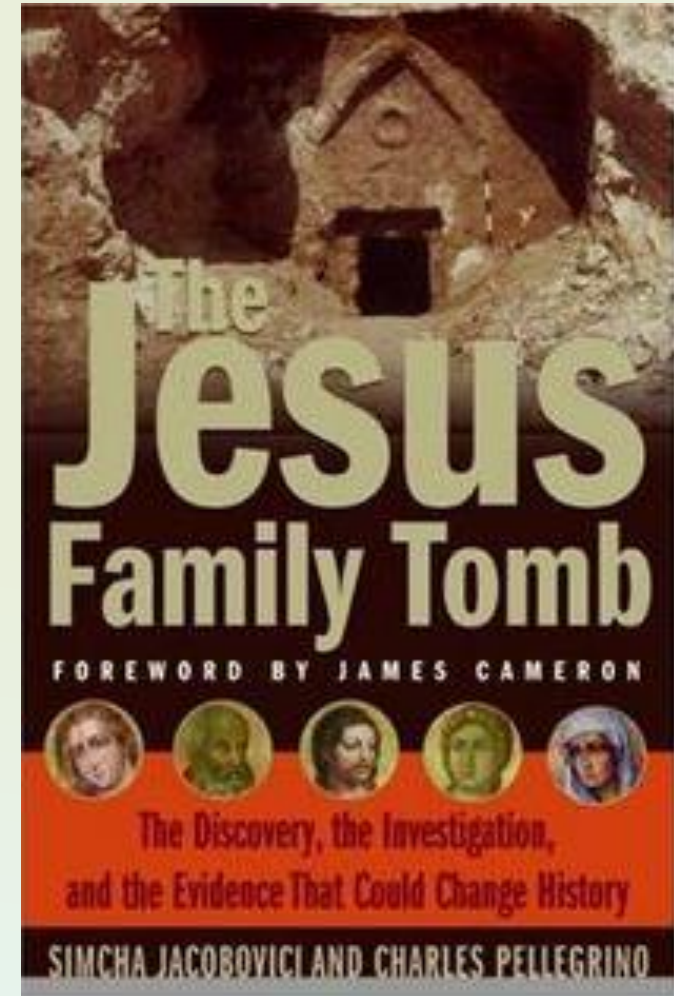
It got a boost when Discovery Channel decided to do a documentary on it. I was quickly discovered that many quotes and much of the research was mis-represented. Archeologists and researchers were quite angry about this and denounced both the book, the authors and documentary. No credible scholar accepted the proposition that this burial was the family of Jesus.

The conclusions for those in “The Quest for the Historical Jesus” movement is either:

1. Jesus’ followers were so gullible and emotionally unstable that they imagined and then projected events and miracles in the life Jesus. Or...
2. The leaders were cunning, malevolently and deceptive toward their followers.

The Christian conclusion: Jesus really said, did and accomplished what was recorded by the writers of the New Testament.

Knowing Who Jesus Is – John 5

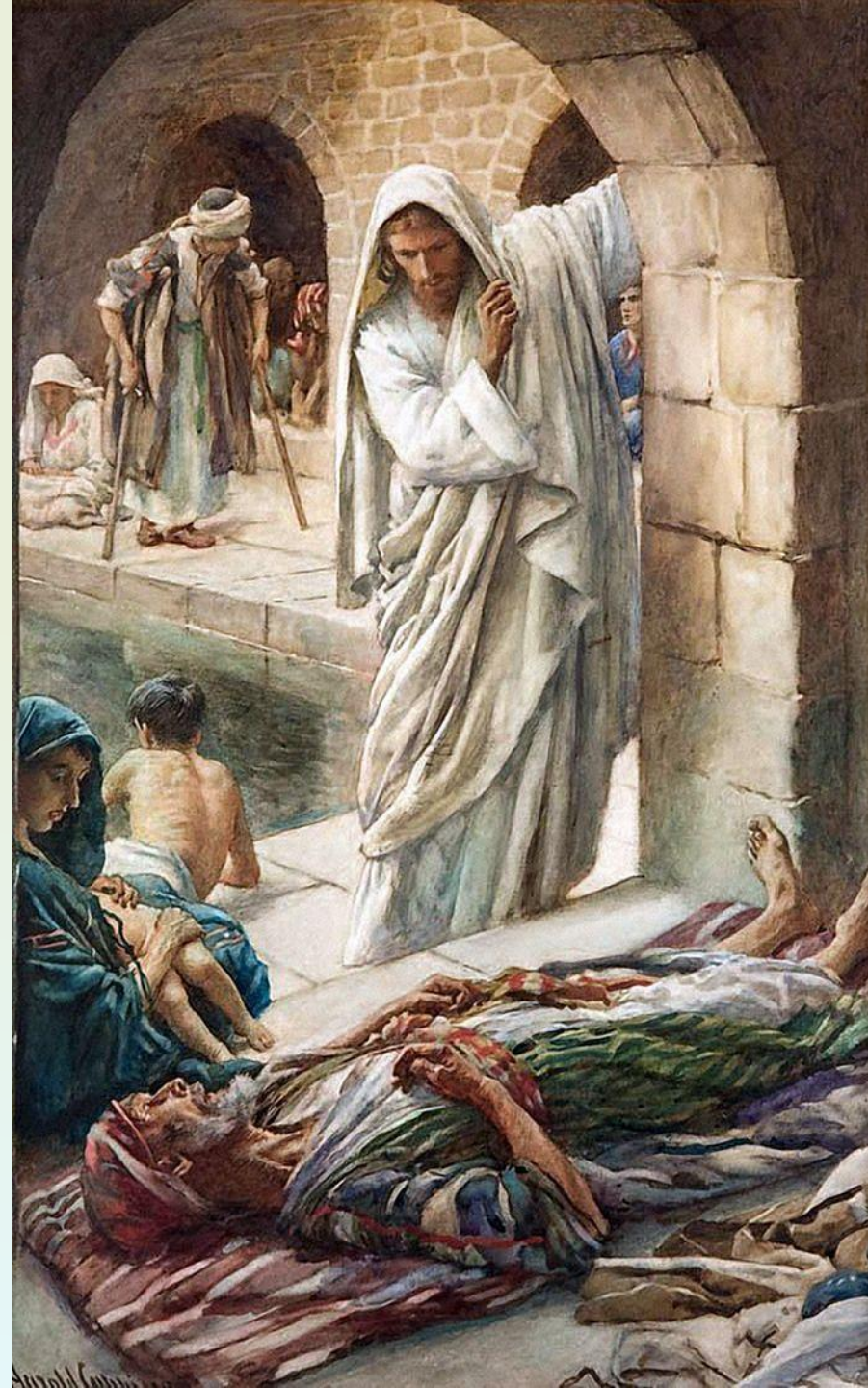


2009 “*The Jesus Family Tomb*” by Simcha Jacobovici & Charles Pellegrino

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In my opinion it takes more faith to believe the skeptics. They have a record of failure stretching back over 3 centuries while the case for Christianity gets stronger with the passing decades. What type of hard headed person are you?



*“Jesus
Heals the
Lame Man
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of
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