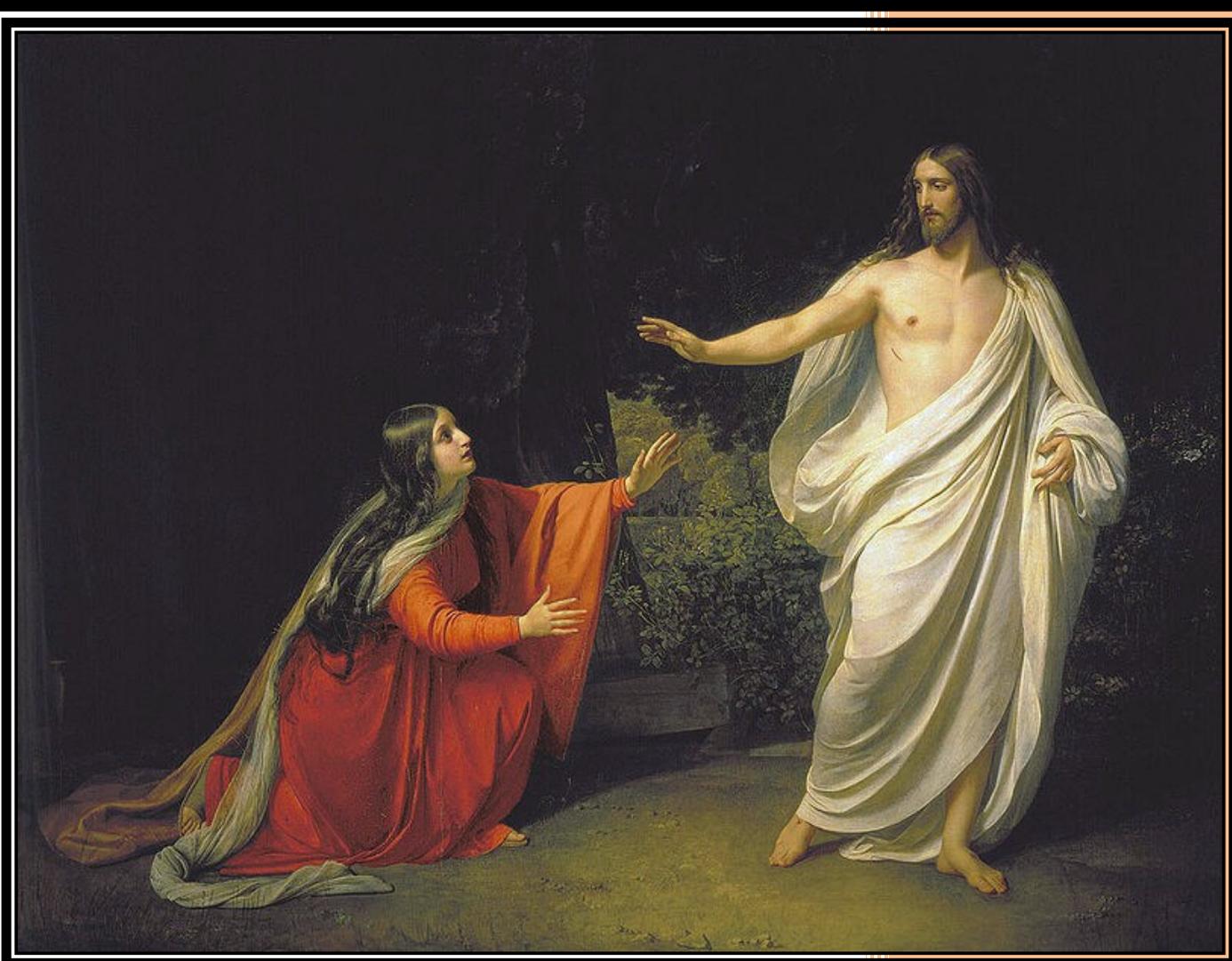


An Excerpt from:

Christianity vs Critical Thinking

“10 Challenging Questions Every Believer (&Skeptic) Should Ask”

Question 10



Is The Second Coming Of Jesus A Failed Prophecy?

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The Second Coming of Jesus: A Failed Prophecy?

On False Prophets

What does the bible say about false prophets?

Deu 18:22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

The bible says many things about prophets and false prophets, but in a nutshell, if a **prediction** is made in the name of God that does not come to pass, well then, it didn't come from God. This is an easy position because no God actually "says" anything (that can be objectively verified).

Consequently, if I claim a divine revelation that something will happen (the Arizona Cardinals will win the Super Bowl in 2015) and it doesn't happen, then I am a false prophet. If, however, they do win the Super Bowl, well now... suffice it to say, God *may* have told me because it turned out true.

It is only when the prediction fails that God disavows having had a hand in it.

So let's apply this simple test to the claims of Jesus Christ. That is, if Jesus makes a divine prediction (and since he is supposedly the Son of God, one of the actual Trinity of the Godhead, anything he predicts is necessarily divine), and the prediction does not happen, then Jesus would be a false prophet. Correct?

Did Jesus make false claims?

One must understand, in defense of Jesus, that there is no record of Jesus of Nazareth ever having said or written anything whatsoever, historically. That is to say, everything ever written about Jesus, what he said, what he did, what he thought, has been attributed *to* him, by what others wrote.

Further, there is no historical record of Jesus Christ until at least 30 years after his supposed crucifixion.ⁱ And there is not a single known eye witness that can testify to the life of Jesus, though there were more than 40 known historians during that time and place.ⁱⁱ

Modern historians date the earliest Gospel (the Gospel of Mark) beyond 70 C.E.ⁱⁱⁱ ^{iv} “This would make it some 40 years after the alleged crucifixion of Jesus that we have any Gospel writings that mention him!”^v

How does a man heal the sick, make the blind see, feed 5000 people with 5 loafs of bread and two fishes (Matthew 14:13-21), walk on water, get crucified and save the entire of humanity from the wrath of God, without a single word being written about it until 30 or more years *after* the event?

Therefore, in defense of Jesus, I personally hold the position that Jesus more than likely did not say anything that was ever attributed to him, especially since maintaining the memory of what he said would have had to span two lifetimes of the average male, from the time it was spoken.

Add to that, supposing a possible written record of what he may have said, and it too is unlikely since literacy in Palestine back then, was around 3% or less.

it is no exaggeration to say that the total literacy rate in the Land of Israel ... was probably less than 3%. Most the [sic] this 3 percent would have been wealthy Jews living in the major cities.^{vi}

Now we have the proper context for asking the question, “Did Jesus make false claims?” My position is, “no.” He made NO claims that anyone could ever verify, so attributing *any* words to him would be a fabrication. That being said, what follows comes from the Holy Bible. So you can believe what you will.

Claims made by Jesus *according to the Holy Bible*

These first few are only to show that claims by Jesus have been made, that can be demonstrated as false. They are just to make the point. All of these are in the words of Jesus *according to the bible*.

Regarding: The power of faith

Matthew 17:20 *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

Is it true? No? Okay. Let’s move on.

Regarding: Asking in Jesus’ Name

John 14:13 *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

Is it true? No? Okay. Let's move on.

Regarding: Signs of the Faithful (especially those whom would dare call themselves Apostles)

Mark 16:17 *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

Is any of that true? Can any believer do any of those things (without fakery)? I've got some liquid Drano handy, if anyone would like to take a couple of swigs. No? Okay. Let's move on.

On to something much more significant

Jesus predicts not only the End Times but also his second coming, and when! Now, the faithful point out that the bible specifically says that no one knows the exact time of such an event, (see Mat 24:36). But this is *within* a time frame that *is* in fact given.

For example: I will be at your house tomorrow, but I don't know for sure at what time.

Granted, not knowing at what time is what Mat 24:36 is saying, but the Day is what Jesus is saying just two verses earlier in Mat 24:34 "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

There is no claim of "out of context" here, (the usual lament against contradictions) as Jesus clearly emphasizes "know that it is near, *even* at the doors" in verse 24:33 which supplies both context and urgency. "This generation" is in no way a metaphor but a specific **prediction**.

The urgency of this prediction is substantiated in other verses as well. Proof:

Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. [Matthew 16:28]

Jesus is saying here to his listeners that some of them standing before him will not die before his second coming in his kingdom.

One need only ask two questions: 1 – Is Jesus back? 2 – Are any of those people that were standing before him still alive? No? Failed prediction.

But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God. [Luke 9:27]

Same story, different verse.

Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. [Matthew 23:36]

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. [Matthew 24:34]

Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. [Matthew 26:64]

Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. [Mark 9:1]

Other verses not by Jesus but understanding the words of Jesus as described above:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:17]

In context:

1Th 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1Pe 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

Here is the claim in its complete context:

Mat 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Mat 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Mat 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh:

Mat 24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

Mat 24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Mat 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Mat 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Mat 24:37 But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

The Short Story

The end will come within the lifetime of Jesus's listeners.

The second coming of Jesus in all his glory was predicted by Jesus to happen within the lifetime (generation) of those to whom he was speaking. Realizing that a generation during that time was barely a life expectancy of 45 years, even if we assume a generation of 100 years, Jesus is wrong by a magnitude of at least 19 centuries, and counting.

If this is not a failed prophesy, there is no such thing as a failed prophesy.

Further, those to whom he was speaking also understood it to mean within their life time.

What the Bible says about the End of the World

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants **things which must shortly come to pass**; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

Rev 1:2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Rev 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this **prophecy**, and keep those things which are written therein: **for the time is at hand**.

(Emphasis in bold are mine.) The words “shortly” or phrases like “for the time is at hand” or “things must shortly come to pass” certainly cannot mean or imply 19 centuries or more into

the future, especially if Jesus says outright that some of them will still be alive! There is no lack of context here of what Jesus meant. The prophesy simply did not come to pass.

ⁱ http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Evidence_for_the_historical_existence_of_Jesus_Christ

ⁱⁱ <http://www.holysmoke.org/sdhok/jesus5.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ Citing Pagels, 1995: <http://exposingreligionblog.tumblr.com/post/28593083606>

^{iv} Elaine Pagels: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elaine_Pagels

^v Citing Pagels, 1995: <http://exposingreligionblog.tumblr.com/post/28593083606>

^{vi} Catherine Hezser, Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine, 2001 p46-61.

Read Me

This document is an excerpt (Question #10) from, **Christianity vs Critical Thinking - "10 Challenging Questions Every Believer (& Skeptic) Should Ask,"** (formerly, God Answers Me) by Dorian Greer.

The complete text can be found at Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com/dp/BOOSHK7SBE>)

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Thank you.