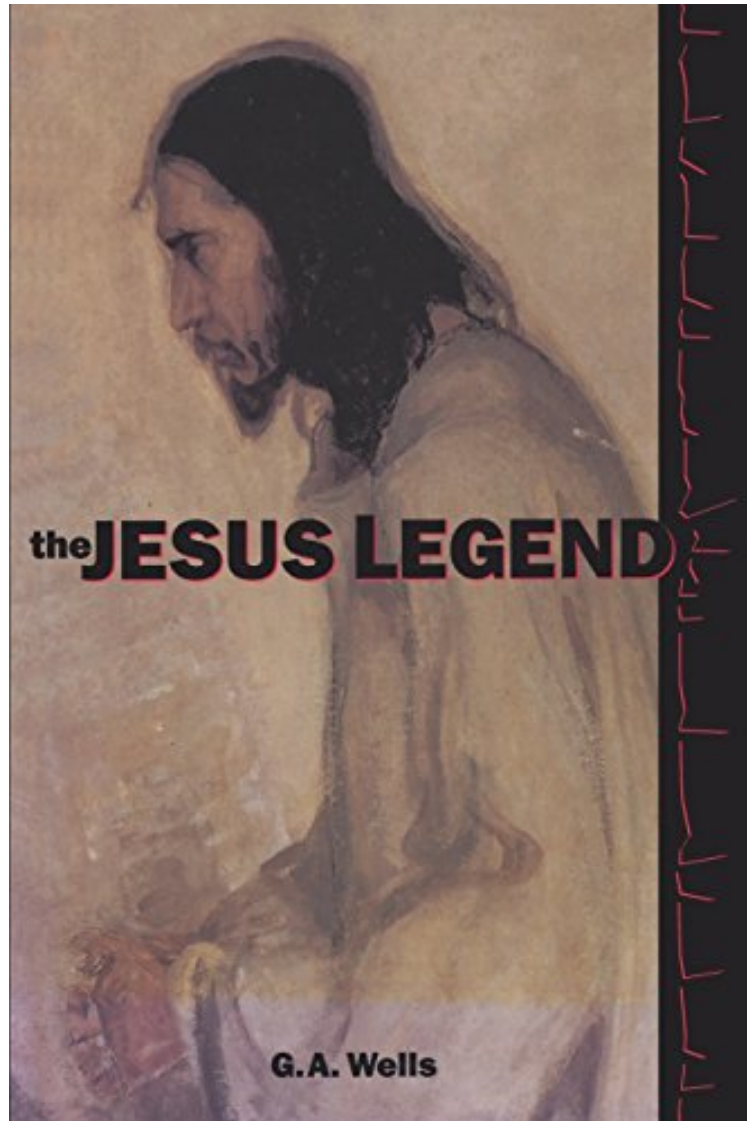


[FREE] The Jesus Legend

## The Jesus Legend

*George Albert Wells*

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**George Albert Wells : The Jesus Legend** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Jesus Legend:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Keith Herrick Excellent study. Solid proofs. Compelling argument. Well written! 11 of 28 people found the following review helpful. Wells the radical controversialist By Geronimo I'm surprised how many positive reviews this book has gotten. It is actually a terrible book. Wells makes a number of outrageous claims in this books: \*He claims that Jesus lived in the second century B.C. (that's right, "before Christ"). \*He argues that the Apostle Paul didn't think Jesus was a real human being, against

passages like Rom 1:3; Gal 1:19; 4:4 and everything else we know of earliest Christian beliefs.\*Following many of Burton Mack's views on Q (which have been severely critiqued by scholars like Christopher Tuckett and James M. Robinson) he claims that Jesus was something of a Cynic sage who talked a lot about nature and that sort of thing and who tried to be a stick in the eye of society; the ideas we find in Mark, the other Gospels and Paul about Jesus' miracles, the resurrection and eschatological beliefs about a final resurrection, judgment and all the rest were added by later communities of Christians who really didn't know much about the real historical Jesus.\*He claims Mark was written toward the end of the first century, I think around 90 AD.And these are just a few of radical positions Wells espouses in this book. His views are indeed radical and few reputable scholars would follow him. Wells is obviously intelligent and a good writer but seriously prejudiced against Christianity. Also, he is a controversialist and therefore not to be viewed as reliable.If you want to understand the origins of Christianity there are better books to read, such as "Fabricating Jesus" by Craig Evans, "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses" by Richard Bauckham, "Reinventing Jesus" by J. Ed Komoszewski, M. James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace, or "Jesus and the Victory of God" by N.T. Wright. But really if you're interested in "finding out the real truth" about Christian origins, don't be lame and think you'll come to any worthwhile conclusions after reading a book or two, especially one like this one from Wells which has an obvious slant. If you're interested in studying the historical Jesus I recommend immersing yourself in the primary sources. Read the New Testament first of all. Learn Greek. Study the early Church Fathers. Read contemporary works of the early centuries BC and AD, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Pseudepigrapha, the Greek and Latin Classics, etc. It's a tough road but well worth it. Books like Wells' are for people who are looking for reasons to slam Christianity. People who are not well versed in the subject matter discussed in Wells' book will easily fall for his misinformation, half-truths and rhetorical slants. It's very sad. There is now another book by the same title ("The Jesus Legend") written by Eddy and Boyd. It deals with many of Wells' arguments and will hopefully lead people to more reasonable conclusions in their studies about the historical Jesus.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A revealing look at Christian scripture as literature and legendBy UlfilasThe author provides the reader with a careful survey of the New Testament writings that have come to represent the life and teachings of Jesus. In doing so, he asks us to imagine the world that was the source of these writings--one that existed well before modern printing, editing, and journalism. He makes it clear that the various writers who composed the Gospels, Pauline letters, and so fourth were often unaware of each others writings; while at other times they borrowed from each others work. The working of these many hands led to various issues becoming clouded. For example, was the kingdom of God immediately at hand and about to arrive before the last of the disciples died, or was this event to occur in the distant future? It also seemed that the Pauline letters were written without any knowledge of Jesus' supposed biography. Such discrepancies are in keeping with the account of a life that is largely legendary--which is the central and well-argued point of the author.The discussion of the Gospel of Mark is of particular interest. It is generally believed that Mark was written before the other four Gospels, and that the Gospels Matthew and Luke borrowed heavily from Mark. Therefore, Mark is closer to the origin of the Jesus legend than the other Gospels. The author views Mark as a literary work where drama is enhanced at the expense of realism. For example, the disciples are shown as unable to understand Jesus' parables--which made them seem impossibly dull! This dullness, however, served a dramatic purpose in that they were later able to understand after the Resurrection. He also observes that some aspects of the Gospel of Mark may reflect the conflict between Christian and Jewish communities during the time that the book was written (70-100 AD?)--rather than the situation characteristic of 30 AD Palestine. I would also make an additional observation, that the attempt of the gospels to present Christianity as an otherworldly religion that does not challenge Roman temporal power, was meant to aid Christians at the time of the Gospels' composition.

Did Jesus actually exist as a historical personage roughly corresponding to the various stories given in the four New Testament gospels and other Christian documents? Was he really born in Bethlehem and crucified by Pilate?In *The Jesus Legend*, G.A. Wells shows how the story of Jesus developed through telling and re-telling, from an early version in the letters of Paul (who does not mention Jesus in connection with any specific time or place) to the more elaborate and detailed picture later presented in the gospels."G.A. Wells knows thoroughly the works of those scholars who, like himself, have devoted much of their lives to asking, 'Who is Jesus Christ?'. In *The Jesus Legend*, he once again exemplifies first-rate historical investigation and praiseworthy biblical scholarship. I know of no author who has shed more light on the question of how Christianity came into being". -- J.E. Barnhart University of North Texas

From *Library Journal*In this forcefully argued book, Wells (*What's in a Name*, Open Court, 1993) presents evidence for the thesis that the New Testament writings form a part of a developing legendary tradition concerning the earthly life of Jesus. The written tradition, he argues, begins from the Pauline letters and early Christian epistles, develops through later epistles such as 1 Corinthians, continues in the full descriptions of Jesus' appearances, and culminates in descriptions of the resurrection itself. Besides evaluating the reliability of the documentary evidence and manuscript traditions and the role of anti-Semitism in the Gospels, Wells engages incisively the works of the most ardent critics of the mythicist view of Jesus, e.g., J. Redford, J.P. Meier, and J.W. Montgomery. Not all readers will agree with the

scheme of dating the New Testament writings on which Well's thesis depends, but his critical treatment is nothing less than exemplary. For theological research libraries and readers of popular religious books. Robert H. O'Connell, Denver, Col. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. The Jesus Legend shows how the story of Jesus developed through telling and re-telling, from an early version in the letters of Paul (who does not mention Jesus in connection with any specific time or place) to the more elaborate and detailed picture later presented in the gospels. Professor Wells discusses the earliest Pagan and Jewish references to Jesus, the dating of the various New Testament documents and the contradictions among them, the authorship of documents as indicated by stylometric analysis, the influence of antisemitism in early Christianity, and the various stratagems resorted to by apologists to deflect historical criticism. Wells also develops his argument by giving detailed answers to recent critics of the mythicist view of Jesus. -- Midwest Book From the Back Cover Did Jesus actually exist as a historical personage roughly corresponding to the various stories given in the four New Testament gospels? Was he really born in Bethlehem and crucified by Pilate? These questions are usually answered with an unqualified 'yes', and often with an expression of outrage or ridicule that any such doubts could even be voiced. Yet it is considered quite normal to question the historical existence of other legendary figures, such as King Arthur or William Tell, who, like Jesus, are not attested to by any surviving contemporary records. In The Jesus Legend, G. A. Wells explains how the story of Jesus developed through telling and re-telling, from an early version in the letters of Paul (who does not mention Jesus in connection with any specific time or place) to the more elaborate and detailed pictures later presented in the New Testament gospels. Professor Wells also replies to recent criticisms of his own radical theory of the origin of Christianity.