



BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY UNIT OUTLINE

MASTER OF THEOLOGY MASTER OF MINISTRY

UNIT TITLE:	THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS
UNIT CODE:	B74118
UNIT STATUS	Elective
HOST FIELD	A/B
PREREQUISITE/S:	A/B73014 Studying the Scriptures I – Method & Hermeneutic
INCOMPATIBLES	-
CREDIT POINTS	10 credit points
REQUIREMENTS	3 hours per week contact and 7 hours per week study over a 13 week semester.
FREQUENCY OF OFFERING	Even years – Semester 2
PREPARED BY UNIT	Revd Dr Ray Barraclough
COORDINATOR	Revd Dr Ray Barraclough
TEACHING STAFF	TBA
DATE PREPARED:	5 February 2004

Rationale

A study of the 'Quest for the Historical Jesus' is a specialist undertaking requiring a grounding in academic study of the scriptures, of hermeneutics and of the history of ideas. This particular area of study utilises scholarly study of both the canonical and non-canonical gospels, in particular the synoptic gospels. This unit would also relate to the study of Christology in the field of theology as well as the Christological disputes that occurred in the period of the early church to 500CE. Integral to the unit will be study of how social, political, economic, cultural, theological and ecclesiastical dynamics, both in the past and in the present, have affected and continue to influence portrayals of Jesus.

Relation to Course

This unit will contribute to the study both of the canonical and non-canonical gospels and of the wider field of biblical studies. It will also be pertinent to research in the field of Christology. The concentrated focus of this unit will enable students to give attention to a specialised area of study that has engaged scholars for more than 150 years. The advanced research skills required, along with the need to respond critically and analytically to a diverse range of literature, make this an appropriate postgraduate unit.

Aim

The unit aims to enable students to grasp the interwoven contexts – namely, historical, philosophical, theological, hermeneutical and exegetical contexts – shaping the various quests

for the historical Jesus. The unit would also aim to deepen the student's scholarly study of the various canonical and non-canonical sources appealed to in regard to the quests.

Learning Outcomes

On the successful completion of this unit, the student will be able to

1. assess the influence of different historical contexts on exegetical and theological interpretation of the canonical and non-canonical gospels and other key ancient sources.
2. explore and critically analyse a range of scholarly views presenting 'the historical Jesus'
3. compare and analyse parallel primary sources and engage in study of redaction
4. distil the main points from academic articles, monographs or other required reading
5. access material from internet sources
6. lead and facilitate discussion in an academic study group
7. present an academic paper or presentation in a tutorial group context
8. write extended essay/s on directed or chosen academic topic/s
9. initiate research topics and titles in regard to extended essay/s on chosen academic topic/s

Content

Important issues that will be studied in regard to the 'Quest for the Historical Jesus' include:

1. a historical survey of studies of 'the historical Jesus' with a particular focus on such studies in the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries
2. a study of significant contributors – Reimarus, Renan, Strauss, Schweitzer, Bornkamm, Fuchs, Meier, Crossan, Johnson, the Jesus Seminar, Wright.
3. a study of the varied criteria used in determining the 'authentic' words and deeds of Jesus
4. a study of the varied canonical and non-canonical gospel passages pertinent to the subject.
5. an assessment of the contribution of each of the canonical and non-canonical gospels to the quest.

Students will select particular topics that will require more extensive and detailed study, especially in regard to the students' presentations of their research work. These topics are to be agreed upon in consultation with the lecturer.

Organisation and Teaching Strategies

The contact time for all students of three hours per week over a period of thirteen weeks will include both lectures and tutorials. Media used will be lecture handouts, overhead projection material, PowerPoint presentations and appropriate audiovisual resources.

When taught as an **Intensive**, the lectures and tutorials of the unit will cover five days.

Assessment

1. Two exegetical tutorial papers – 1500 words each – each worth 20% (Objectives 1-7 and 9)
2. One major research project focusing on a significant theme dealing with the quest for the historical Jesus – 4000 words – 60% (Objectives 1-5 and 8-9.)

All work submitted for assessment is expected to demonstrate scholarly treatment of both primary texts and secondary literature, including comparison and analysis of parallel primary sources, especially through redactional study (Objectives 1-3) and familiarity with key points attainable from academic journals, monographs and internet sources (Objectives 4-5). All students will also be required to demonstrate proficiency in leading and facilitating discussion in an academic study group (Objective 6) and the presentation of an academic paper and/or oral presentation in a tutorial group context (Objective 7).

Generic Skills

- Advanced skills in research, including use and interpretation of primary and secondary texts.
- Advanced skills in integration of a variety of research material.

- Advanced writing skills entailing clarity of focus, conciseness and relevance.
- Advanced skills in use of electronic catalogues, databases and search engines.

Textbooks

Required

Crossan JD, Johnson JT, Kelber WH *The Jesus Controversy – Perspectives in Conflict*, Trinity Press, Harrisburg, 1999.

Recommended

Bockmuehl, Marcus ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.

Academic & General Resource Requirements

References - Books

Bennett, C. *In Search of Jesus: Insider and Outsider Images*, Continuum, New York, 2001.

Borg, Marcus J. and Wright, N.T. *The Meaning of Jesus – Two Visions*, Harper, San Francisco, 1999

Borg, Marcus J. *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, Trinity Press, Valley Forge, 1994

Bruteau, B., ed., *Jesus Through Jewish Eyes – Rabbis and Scholars Engage an Ancient Brother in a New Conversation*, Orbis, New York, 2001.

Charlesworth, James, H. ed. *Jesus' Jewishness - Exploring the Place of Jesus in Early Judaism*, Crossroad, New York, 1991.

Copan P. and Evans, C. A. eds, *Who Was Jesus? A Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, Westminster/John Knox, Louisville, 2001.

Corley, K. E. *Women and the Historical Jesus: Feminist Myths of Christian Origins*, Santa Rosa, Polebridge, 2002.

Crossan, John Dominic, *The Historical Jesus - The life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, Collins/Dove, 1991.

Crossan, John Dominic. *The Essential Jesus*, Harper/Collins, San Francisco, 1994.

Dawes, G. W., *The Historical Jesus Question – The Challenge of History to Religious Authority*, Westminster/John Knox, Louisville, 2001.

Dear, John SJ. *Jesus the Rebel – Bearer of God's Peace and Justice*, Sheed & Ward, Franklin, 2000.

Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schlussler, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*, SCM, London, 1994.

Hedrick, Charles W. *When History and Faith Collide: Studying Jesus*, Hendrickson, 1999

Heyward, Carter, *Saving Jesus from those who are right*, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1999.

Hoover, R. W. *Profiles of Jesus*, Santa Rosa, Polebridge, 2002.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. "The Word Was Made Flesh and Dwelt Among Us: Jesus Research and Christian Faith" in *Jesus – A Colloquium in the Holy Land*, Doris Donnelly ed, Continuum, New York, 2001, 146-166.

Johnson, Luke Timothy, *Living Jesus: Hearing the Heart of the Gospel*, Harper, San Francisco, 1999

Meier, John, P. *A Marginal Jew - Rethinking the historical Jesus* Vol. 1 "The Roots of the Problem and the Person" Doubleday, New York, 1991.

Meier, John, P. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the historical Jesus*, Vol. 2, Doubleday, New York, 1993

Sanders, E. P. *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, Penguin, London, 1993.

Schweitzer, Albert, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus – A critical study of its progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, Macmillan, New York, 1961.

Vermes, Geza, *Jesus in His Jewish Context*, Fortress, Philadelphia, 2003.

Vermes, Geza, *The Changing Faces of Jesus*, Penguin, London, 2000.

Weren, Wim, *Windows on Jesus: Methods in Gospel Exegesis*, SCM, London, 1999.

Witherington, Ben III, *Jesus the Sage – The Pilgrimage of Wisdom*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1994.

References – Journal Articles

The publication *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* was launched in 2003. Several articles are listed below. The authors are listed in alphabetical order.

- Allison, D. C. “The Continuity between John and Jesus”, *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 1, 2003, 6-27.
- Barker, M. “The Time is Fulfilled: Jesus and Jubilee”, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 53, 2000, 22-32.
- Black, C. C. “Kindred Books on Jesus”, *Theology Today*, 57, 2001, 533-539.
- Freyne, Sean, “A Galilean Messiah”, *Studia Theologica*, 55, 2001, 198-218.
- Haring, Hermann, “The History of Jesus as the Foundation and Origin of Religious Identity” *Concilium*, 2000, 100-112.
- Holmen, T., “A Theologically Disinterested Quest? On the Origins of the ‘Third Quest’ for the Historical Jesus”, *Studia Theologica*, 55, 2001, 175-197.
- Jackson, G. S. “The Complete Gospel: Jesus and Women via the Jesus Seminar”, *Feminist Theology*, 28, 2001, 27-39.
- Keating, J. F., “The Invincible allure of the Historical Jesus for Systematic Theology”, *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 66, 2001, 211-226.
- Loewe, William P. “From the Humanity of Christ to the Historical Jesus” *Theological Studies*, 61, 2000, 314-331
- McEvoy, J., “Narrative or History? – A False Dilemma. The theological Significance of the Historical Jesus”, *Pacifica*, 14, 2001, 262-280.
- McKnight, S., “Calling Jesus *mamzer*”, *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 1, 2003, 73-103.
- Meier, J. P. “The Historical Jesus and the Historical Law: Some Problems within the Problem”, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 63, 2003, 52-79.
- Twelftree, G. H. “The Miracles of Jesus: Marginal or Mainstream?”, *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 1, 2003, 104-124.
- Winger, M. “Why Didn’t Jesus Write?”, *Expository Times*, 111, 2000, 269-267.

References – Online and other IT Resources

- The New Testament Gateway. <http://www.ntgateway.com>
- Religion-Online. <http://www.religion-online.org>
- Resource Pages for Biblical Studies. <http://www.torreys.org/bible>
- Virtual Religion Index. <http://religion.rutgers.edu/vri/index.html>