

The Historical Jesus

A Set of Potential Questions for the Final Exam

Some of the following questions will appear on the Final Exam as they appear here. Others will appear in an altered form (What is a true/false question here, might be multiple choice on the Final, for example).

For answering these questions **your class notes** will be more helpful than the assigned readings. Still, you may consult **pages 488—509** in the book by Harris to supplement your class notes.

Answer all questions as you think a recognized New Testament scholar would answer them. You can take this quiz online and get feedback on your answers by going to <http://greek-language.com/bible/questions/finalexam/historicaljesusquiz.html>.

1. The Gospel writers attempted to
 - a. write objective biographies of Jesus designed to enable readers to reconstruct the life of Jesus
 - b. to interpret Jesus theologically for the communities they served

Notice that the following question is based on the lectures, not on Harris' book. Harris might give a different answer from the one proposed in class. If asked this question on the Final Exam, answer based on the definitions given in class.

2. In studies about Jesus, scholars often distinguish between the *Christ of faith* and the *Jesus of history*. Which of the following is the best definition of the 'Christ of faith'?
 - a. The Christ of faith is Jesus as proclaimed by the Christian community.
 - b. The Christ of faith is the very limited picture of Jesus that emerges when we use only data which can be 'proven' by using the historical method.
 - c. The Christ of faith is the real Jesus as we would see him if we could go back in time and listen to him teaching in Galilee.
3. Large amounts of information about Jesus may be found in non-Christian sources such as Josephus and Tacitus. In fact, we know almost as much about Jesus from these sources as from the Christian Gospels.
4. The criterion of *dissimilarity* asserts that
 - a. if an historical statement can be read as challenging the goals of the document in which it occurs or the goals of the community which preserved that document, then it is likely to be *true*
 - b. if an historical statement can be read as challenging the goals of the document in which it occurs or the goals of the community which preserved that document, then it is likely to be *false*
 - c. if an historical statement is not similar to other statements made in the same document, then it is probably false
5. The criterion of *multiple attestation* asserts that
 - a. if an historical statement is supported by more than one source, it is probably true regardless of what the literary relationship of those sources might be
 - b. if an historical statement is supported by more than one source, and if the relevant sources could not be dependent upon one another, then the statement is probably true
 - c. if an historical statement is supported by more than one source, the sources must be related to one another if the statement is true

6. The *Jesus Seminaris*
 - a. a course at Meredith College
 - b. a seminar offered by many theological seminaries
 - c. an organization of scholars who study the Historical Jesus
7. The Jesus Seminar asserts that Jesus
 - a. preached a highly apocalyptic message, expecting the arrival of the Kingdom of God and the end of natural history shortly after his death
 - b. preached a message that had little to do with popular eschatology

Places and Events in Jesus' Life

8. Jesus grew up in _____.
 - a. Jerusalem
 - b. Bethlehem
 - c. Capernaum
 - d. Nazareth
9. Jesus was born sometime between
 - a. 40 and 27 BCE
 - b. 6 and 4 BCE
 - c. 1 and 12 CE
 - d. 27 and 30 CE
10. According to the canonical Gospels Jesus was born in _____.
 - a. Jerusalem
 - b. Bethlehem
 - c. Capernaum
 - d. Nazareth
11. Jesus was crucified in _____.
 - a. Jerusalem
 - b. Bethlehem
 - c. Capernaum
 - d. Nazareth
12. The New Testament includes references to Jesus' brothers and sisters, including James, who later became a leader of the church at Jerusalem.
13. Which of the following is true about the New Testament claim that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist?
 - a. While the New Testament reports this event, we have no way to prove whether it actually happened or not. It must be accepted as a matter of faith.
 - b. Most historians would say that we have good evidence for this event. We can demonstrate that it is extremely likely that Jesus was actually baptized by John.
14. During Jesus' public ministry
 - a. he attracted large crowds of both supporters and opponents.
 - b. he probably did not attract much attention. The Christian movement took on great force only after Jesus' death.
 - c. he attracted large crowds, but the crowds virtually always opposed Jesus. He had few supporters.
 - d. he attracted large crowds of supporters. Strong popular opposition to his message arose only after his death.
15. Jesus' public ministry lasted
 - a. between one and three years
 - b. about six months
 - c. between five and ten years

16. Although the Gospels record that Jesus consistently rejected a political application of his 'kingdom' preaching, we can tell that his teaching about the kingdom of God aroused the suspicions of king Herod Antipas.
17. Who actually carried out the crucifixion of Jesus?
- a group of Roman soldiers
 - an angry mob, without the help of the Romans
 - the Jewish temple leadership

Terms and Concepts to Remember

(from the Lecture on Jesus of Nazareth and pages 429—444 of the textbook)

Some of these terms are found in the glossary beginning on page 534 in Harris' book.

The Jesus of History

The Jesus Seminar

The Christ of Faith

Aphorism

"Proof" and "Probability" in Historical Research

Tacitus