



# The Historical Quest for 'the Real Jesus'

Are the Gospel accounts of the life and teachings  
of Jesus Christ historically accurate?

... Including a Prelude study ...

## An Introduction to Biblical Canonicity

Why were certain books included or excluded from the Bible?

### Instructors:

Dr. Jeffrey Breshears  
Kathy Cook

### Dates and Time:

Wednesdays, Jan. 14 - April 28  
7 - 8:30 PM

**Registration:** \$60 or \$100 per couple

### Location:

This Areopagus seminar course will begin as a virtual Zoom class but will transition to both a Zoom and an in-person class at the earliest date possible.

### Texts (optional):

Jeffrey D. Breshears (2017), *Introduction to Bibliology: What Every Christian Should Know About the Origins, Composition, Inspiration, Canonization, and Transmission of the Bible*  
Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus* (1998).  
Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (1998).

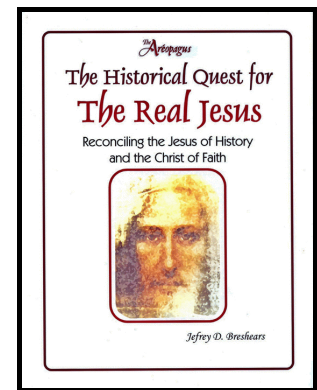
### Course synopsis:

This course is divided into a 2 parts:

- 1. Prelude: An Introduction to Biblical Canonicity** focuses on why certain ancient texts were included or excluded from the Bible, and the criteria for distinguishing between the two.
- 2. The Historical Quest for the 'Real Jesus'** focuses on why we can be confident that the Gospel accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus are historically accurate.

Jesus Christ is the central person in history and the only one whose claims to divinity have been taken seriously by millions of people worldwide for nearly 2,000 years.

However, there is widespread disagreement – even among Bible scholars – concerning the historical Jesus. Many contend that the gospel accounts of his life are unreliable and based on later myths and legends, and that there is little correlation between the so-called 'historical Jesus' and the 'Christ of faith' that Christians came to worship as divine.



Are there good reasons to accept the traditional understanding of Jesus and the historicity of the gospels, or has modern scholarship proven otherwise?

This course critiques the pseudo-scholarship of radical Biblical scholars and challenges Christians to encounter Jesus not only as an historical person but as a living reality. Among the topics covered in this course are...

- Are there ancient texts that could (or should) have been included in Bible but were omitted for illegitimate reasons?
- What about the books of the Apocrypha? Why are they not included in Protestant Bibles?
- What about the “Gnostic Gospels”? Why were they never included in the Bible?
- The controversies surrounding the historical Jesus of Nazareth.
- Are the Biblical gospel accounts of Jesus’ life historically reliable?
- The Jesus Seminar and popular heretical Christologies propagated by radical scholars such as Elaine Pagels, John Dominic Crossan, John Shelby Spong, Bart Ehrman, *et al.*
- An historical survey of the quest for ‘the real Jesus.’
- What do we know about Jesus based on extra-biblical historical sources?
- Historical revisionism and the Jesus controversy.
- Was the resurrection of Jesus mythical or historical – and why does it matter?
- Who is ‘the real Jesus,’ and how can we experience him personally?

#### **Note on the Instructors:**

**Dr. Jeffrey Breshears** is a historian, a former university professor, and the president of The Areopagus, a Christian education ministry in the Atlanta area that specializes in seminars and forums related to Christian history, apologetics, literature and the arts, and contemporary cultural issues. Dr. Breshears is the author of several books including *Introduction to Bibliology: The Origins, Composition, Inspiration, Interpretation, Canonization, and Transmission of the Bible* (Wipf & Stock, 2017).

**Kathy Cook** is a gifted and highly-respected Bible teacher who began teaching Bible study groups as a teenager. For more than 20 years she was involved in Bible Study Fellowship (BSF), an interdenominational and international Bible study ministry, and for the past ten years she served as the teaching leader of the Atlanta/Marietta BSF chapter. Kathy has also been a student in our Areopagus seminar courses at JFBC for the past 5 years, and we look forward to her presentations on the very vital issues related to biblical canonicity: why certain books were included or excluded from the Bible, and the criteria used by the early church fathers in distinguishing between these books.