

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

APRIL 2007

RICHARD BAUCKHAM, *JESUS AND THE EYEWITNESSES: A REVIEW*

BY TIM KELLER

I don't know if it is the 24-hour news cycle or what, but the number of books, movies, articles, and stories about historical Jesus scholarship has grown into a flood. Last year we had the publication of the "Gospel of Judas" and the release of the *Da Vinci Code* movie. In the last few months we were told both in a book and now in a coming documentary that the tomb of Jesus had been found.

The assumption behind all these theories is that the New Testament gospels originated as oral traditions, pieced together by the leaders of various Christian

church communities, and therefore cannot be trusted as church history. The stories and sayings of Jesus were supposedly shaped to fit the policies and beliefs of the church. These oral traditions were then passed down over the years and evolved through the addition of various legendary materials. Finally, long after the actual events, the gospels assumed written form, by which time it was almost impossible to know to what degree if any they represented the actual historical events.

Richard Bauckham, the highly respected New Testament professor at the University of St Andrews,

Scotland, now challenges all these assumptions in his new book *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Eerdmans, 2006) using the most painstaking and meticulous reasoning and scholarship. It is an extremely important book for believers. Here is the outline of his case.

1. The importance of eyewitness testimony in ancient times. Bauckham shows that in the ancient Mediterranean world historians relied as much as possible on eyewitness testimony. Luke 1 speaks of obtaining information from those who were "from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers" (Continued on page 5)

THE EASTER SACRIFICIAL OFFERING – SUNDAY, APRIL 8, 2007

Each Easter for the last fourteen years Redeemer has received a special offering for our mercy ministry, Hope for New York (HFNY). This offering is used by HFNY to support faith-based organizations throughout New York City that are serving the poor and marginalized. Last year, HFNY approved grants to 35+ affiliates in the areas of:

Adult Recovery	\$136,995
Children/Youth	\$144,755
Community Development	\$47,700

Targeted Populations	\$56,400
Annual Events	\$37,500
Other	\$12,000

What makes HFNY unique, however, is that these programs are not only supported financially, but also with volunteers who sacrificially contribute thousands of hours of service each year. These volunteers put their faith to work making the Gospel a powerful, living presence that touches thousands of lives in our city. During HFNY's last fiscal year,

almost 3,100 volunteers served over 13,000 people!

Please pray about your sacrificial gift this Easter. A special offering will be taken during all Easter Services. You may also mail a donation, making checks payable to Hope for New York, 1359 Broadway, Suite 410, New York, NY 10018. Please visit www.hfny.org/support to learn more about credit card donations, virtual check donations or giving appreciated securities.



REDEEMER ENCOURAGES ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH FORUM, BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

BY JUSTIN BROWNE

On Saturday, March 10th, Redeemer held its second annual Entrepreneurship Forum to bring together business people and entrepreneurs to encourage and support the creation of new gospel-centered, culture-renewing institutions and ventures. The Forum was part of Redeemer's Entrepreneurship Initiative, which is sponsored by The Center for Faith and Work. The Entrepreneurship Initiative was started, in part, through the help of Redeemer's most recent Vision Campaign and is seen as another component in advancing Redeemer's vision of serving and renewing New York City.

The day-long Entrepreneurship Forum featured keynote talks, presentations from experienced entrepreneurs, discussion sessions, and panels offering advice to entrepreneurs from experts in their field. Tim Keller gave the opening and closing remarks, with his opening talk addressing "The Role of the Entrepreneur in Changing Culture." Jack Alexander, who is a multiple entrepreneur and currently the

Chairman & CEO of Tectonic Network, gave the keynote speech and offered some wonderful advice for entrepreneurs by using an acrostic of the word "gospel."

Perhaps the highlight of the afternoon was hearing case studies from entrepreneurs who have started their own gospel-based ventures. Redeemer attendee James Tufenkian may have been the most inspiring of them all. He presented his career story of the multiple ventures that he has started (Tufenkian Carpets, Heritage Hotels, and Harvest Song jams) and how these ventures, as well as The Tufenkian Foundation, have helped to transform thousands of lives in both Nepal and Armenia.

Also present for the Forum were 14 entrepreneurs representing 11 ventures who have been selected as finalists in Redeemer's first-ever business plan competition. The Entrepreneurship Initiative sponsored the competition to encourage entrepreneurs to share their ideas for new gospel-based

ventures. The 11 ventures consisted of for-profit companies, not-for-profit organizations, and arts ventures. The competition was announced in January and will conclude with the winners being selected on April 16th. The winners will be given the opportunity to develop their ventures with resources from the congregation and the church staff.

Overall, the feedback from the Entrepreneurship Forum was very positive with attendees saying that they found the day to be inspiring, informative, and encouraging. The Forum was a key step towards building a core group within Redeemer's congregation that will encourage and support entrepreneurs who have bold ideas for ventures that foster shalom and bring about gospel-centered renewal to New York City and beyond. If you are interested in learning more about the Forum (including hearing some of the talks), or getting more involved with Redeemer's Entrepreneurship Initiative, please visit their main website at www.faithandwork.org/ei

LEGAL FELLOWSHIP PANEL DISCUSSION: MAINTAINING YOUR FAITH AS A LAWYER

Friday, April 27, 7:00PM to 9:30PM

Redeemer Offices, 1359 Broadway (between 36th & 37th Streets), 4th Floor
Hors d'oeuvres provided. Register online (\$10) at www.faithandwork.org

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller
Carl de Prado
Heather Klein

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HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM
East 69TH (Between Park & Lexington)
services at 10:30AM • 5:45PM

ETHICAL CULTURE
West 64TH and CPW
service at 9:15AM

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Corner of West 79TH and Broadway
service at 7:00PM

SUMMER MINI COURSES PROGRAM TO RETURN – NEED TEACHERS

BY JUSTIN BROWNE

Last summer Redeemer launched a pilot program called the Summer Mini Courses as a way to showcase the amazing talents of our congregation and provide opportunities for people to get together during a typically empty programming season. Seventeen classes were offered covering a variety of topics and formats including NYC history and J.R. Tolkien lectures; guitar, hip-hop dance, and tennis lessons; shopping tours; and cooking, photography, and juggling classes. Both Tim and Kathy Keller each taught a class and the program allowed for 425 people to participate in groups ranging from 5 to 50 in size.

The initial effort was an amazing success! The program drew so much interest that the registration process actually slowed down Redeemer's website to a crawl because of the demand (we're assured that problem will not reoccur this year!). Overall, last year all of the classes completely filled, with over 80% of the classes filling up within the first two hours of registration. 85% of respondents rated the classes as either high quality or extremely high quality and two-thirds of the attendees said the program was helpful for meeting new people within the church.

From the surveys we found that last year's highest rated courses were in order with instructor:

- Tennis Lessons
Marion Melton
- Preparing Quick and Fast Summer Menus
Brittany Williams

- Nolita Shopping Tour
Christina Stanton
- Thai Cooking Course
Kay Bhothinard
- Tea, Tolkien, and Tim
Tim Keller

The Summer Mini Courses also helped to launch a class that has become a regularly offered School of Gospel Foundations course. Lourine Clark, Andi Brindley, and Julie Allen first



taught their "Quiet Times in a Noisy City" course as part of last summer's program and have since offered the class two additional times (and a third later this month) to an average audience of fifty people. The class offers teaching to help New Yorkers overcome the busyness of the city to spend precious time with God. Within each class the students learn new quiet time techniques by doing an actual quiet time together. Those who have taken the class have found it to be helpful in reinvigorating their daily time with God. The success of the class has encouraged the instructors to offer similar classes on other topics related to prayer and devotional life.

The Summer Mini Courses will return this year and the program promises to be even better than last year. The classes are likely to run from early June to the end of August and registration will begin mid-May. More information will be communicated to the congregation during the worship services and through Redeemer's website.

In preparation for the second installment of the Summer Mini Courses, we would like to solicit more ideas for classes from the congregation. If you would be willing to teach a class that you believe would be fun and of interest to the congregation, we'd love for you to get in touch with us. What skill or hobby do you have that you could teach? It could be practical like last year's First Aid class, or just plain fun like last year's Kickball "course".

To offer your suggestions for classes you could teach, please visit www.redeemer.com/summer. If you have any questions related to the program, you can also email summer@redeemer.com. We will need to have all submissions for proposed classes by Friday, April 20.

We are excited to offer the Summer Mini Courses again and look forward to seeing what new and exciting classes will be taught by the members of our congregation. We hope once again that the program will be an opportunity to make new friends, learn something new, and have some fun. Please, get involved and help us make this year another success!

EASTER WEEK AT REDEEMER

Thursday, April 5

Maundy Thursday — “Mark’s Gospel”

A solo performance by Max McLean
Ethical Culture Society, 64th St. and Central Park West
7:00PM
Free admission

Friday, April 6

Good Friday — 4 services

5:30PM and 7:30PM at All Souls Church, 80th St. and Lexington Ave.

5:30PM and 7:30PM at Ethical Culture Society, 64th St. and Central Park West
A meditative service focusing on Christ’s sacrifice, with brief reflections by Redeemer’s pastoral staff, and congregational music accompanied by string quartet.

Sunday, April 7

Easter Sunday — 6 services (note changed morning service times)

9:00AM at Ethical Culture Society, 64th and St. Central Park West
*Classical worship with testimonies of changed lives and music by choir and brass quintet.
A special offering will be received for Hope for New York.*

9:45AM and 11:30AM at Hunter College, 69th St. and Park Ave.
Classical worship with testimonies of changed lives and music by the Orchestra of the Redeemer and Choir, with soprano soloist Megan Besley, conducted by Miriam Burns, performing selections from Handel’s “Messiah.” A special offering will be received for Hope for New York.

5:00PM at First Baptist Church, 79th St. and Broadway

6:00PM at Hunter College, 69th St. and Park Ave.

7:15PM at First Baptist Church, 79th St. and Broadway
Jazz-based contemporary worship with testimonies of changed lives and music by the evening service bands with horn section and soloists. A special offering will be received for Hope for New York.

of the word.” Bauckham shows that this is established historiographic language from the time, intended to claim careful preservation of the information about the life and teachings of Jesus. It is the nature of eyewitness testimony to be selective, since each participant only sees part of all that happened. Multiple accounts are therefore necessary to get the full picture. It is because they are eyewitness accounts that we have four gospels instead of one.

2. Papias' evidence.

Bauckham gives evidence that the eyewitnesses of Jesus' life maintained a central role in the early church. He provides an extensive treatment of the writings of Papias, bishop of Hierapolis. He looks at one of Papias' often ignored and misunderstood passages where he says that for decades after Jesus' departure there were many living and surviving eyewitnesses who were actively ministering in the churches. Papias distinguishes three generations—the eyewitnesses, the elders who sat at their feet, and the disciples of the elders. In 80 AD, when Papias was a young man, he says many members of each of the generations—including the eyewitnesses—were still alive. By the 80s the gospel of Mark had been finished and Luke and Matthew were being compiled. This means that the gospels were not anonymous, legend-encrusted oral 'traditions' that had been passed down through the years, but rather oral histories, taken down by the gospel writers right from the mouths of the living and surviving eyewitnesses, who preserved the words and deeds of Jesus in great detail in the public ministry of the churches for many decades after the events.

3. The evidence of names in the gospels. Bauckham looks at the puzzling use of proper names in the gospels. Why is it that some figures are named and others are left nameless? Why is the woman who anoints Jesus before his death unnamed in some gospels but named in John (it's Mary of Bethany)? Why is the healed blind man, Bartimaeus, named in Mark but in no other gospel? Why is one of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus named for us—Cleopas—and the other left anonymous? Why is the soldier whose ear was cut off in Gethsemane, Malchus, named only in John? And why is he named at all, when far more important figures in the narrative go unnamed? Why are 'Rufus and Alexander' named at all (Mark 15:21) when they don't even come into the story? Bauckham gives us nearly every possible theory that tries to account for this phenomenon. Then he carefully provides the one theory that accounts for all the data—the gospel writers were naming their eyewitness sources in the text.

By including the names of living eyewitnesses the authors were assuring readers of the accounts' authenticity. Their names served as guarantors of the tradition. Mark was saying to readers: "Bartimaeus can vouch for the truth of what I am telling you, if you want to ask him." So, for example, Bartimaeus and Salome (one of the women who saw the risen Christ) are named by Mark, but not by Matthew and Luke, because by that time they either were dead or unavailable as sources. There was no use naming them if they could not act as guarantors. Bauckham also notices that the first and last disci-

ple named in Mark is Peter, and the first and last disciple named in John is the 'beloved disciple.' Even Luke's gospel begins and ends with the same witnesses—in this case multiple women. Bauckham then shows in several contemporary Greek historical texts that this '*inclusio*' device may have been a literary convention by which the author was telling his readers who his prime eyewitness sources were.

4. The evidence of anthropology: the difference between legend and history.

Bauckham turns from history to anthropology. For many years it has been claimed that primitive societies cannot tell legend from history, and that they feel free to change handed-down accounts of things past in order to correspond to their present realities and situation. But Bauckham cites J.Vansina's study of oral traditions in primitive African cultures, in which fictional legends and historical accounts are clearly distinguished from each other and much greater care is taken to preserve historical accounts accurately. This finding undermines 100 years of critical gospel scholarship. "*Gospel scholars, from the form critics onward, [believed] that early Christians in the transmission of Jesus traditions would not have made any distinction between the past time of the history of Jesus and their own present because oral societies do not make such distinctions.*" But Bauckham says categorically "*This is untrue.*" (p. 273).

5. The evidence of psychology.

Bauckham makes use of psychology next, looking at studies about the nature and reliability of memory. He lays out the marks of eyewitness accounts of events—

(Continued on page 6)



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JESUS AND THE EYEWITNESSES... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 5)

vividness, unnecessary detail, vantage point or perspective, and so on—and shows how they differ from the features of fictional accounts or of composite historical reconstructions. These eyewitness marks are seen throughout the gospels.

6. The importance of this.

In a closing chapter Bauckham discusses modern efforts to 'get behind' the supposedly prejudiced gospels to find 'the real Jesus of history.' He points to Holocaust

testimony to show how one can be both passionately committed to a cause that one's testimony supports and still provide accurate testimony. Would modern critics want to discount the accounts of Holocaust eyewitnesses as being 'biased' and try to 'get behind' what they say to discover what 'really happened'? In fact, Bauckham concludes, if you saw the resurrection you couldn't be detached or dispassionate about it. Critics who want to 'get behind' the Biblical text could only want

to do so because they've already decided ahead of time that the resurrection did not happen.

This is an important book, but not written at the popular level. A somewhat easier volume would be Craig Blomberg's *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, which is soon coming out in a revised edition. Blomberg loves Bauckham's book and will be incorporating many of his arguments into his new volume, so be sure to get them both.