

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the division of history into B.C. and A.D. When Jesus was born history was referenced from the founding of Rome. That reference point in Latin is "Ab urbe condita" which means "From the founding city". It is abbreviated as AUC. Using the Christian calendar Rome was founded in 753 B.C., or AUC 1. The first person to use Jesus to divide history is thought to be a Christian monk named Dionysius Exiguus (A.D. 470 – 544). "B.C.", of course, means "Before Christ" and "A.D." (Anno Domini) means "the year of our Lord". Those who prefer not to use Jesus as a point of reference use the same dates in the Christian calendar but change "Before Christ" to "BCE" (Before the Common Era), and "A.D." to "CE" (Common Era).

Today, whether admitting it or not, the whole civilized world still uses the birth of Jesus as a reference point. For those who do not believe in Jesus this is like an elephant in the room. You can call an elephant an ant but that doesn't change it's size. You can say "Common Era" instead of "Christ" but that doesn't change history. Every time an individual or a nation dates a letter or a newspaper they are proclaiming the historical reality of Jesus Christ.

Josh McDowell compares the manuscript evidence for Jesus with that of other historical persons.

- Note how comparatively few manuscripts there are in secular history, and how far they are removed from the events they describe.
- Plato – 210 MSS dated 1,200 years from the events. Earliest MS A.D. 900.
- Herodotus – 109 MSS dated 1,300 years from the events. Earliest MS A.D. 900.
- Caesar's account of the Gallic Wars – 251 MSS dated 900 years from the wars. Earliest MS A.D. 1,000.
- Tacitus – 33 MSS dated 750 years from his life. Earliest MS A.D. 850.
- Thucydides – 50 MSS dated 1,300 years from his life. Earliest MS A.D. 900.
- Similar statistics are available for Aristotle, Sophocles, Livy, Demosthenes, Pliny the Younger, Pliny the Elder, etc.
- In spite of this small number of manuscripts and the centuries that separate them from the events they describe, historians generally accept these secular manuscripts as accurate.

BY COMPARISON WITH BIBLE MANUSCRIPTS THERE IS NO COMPARISON!

- Note the contrast with the many Bible manuscripts and their closeness to the events they describe.
- There are over 25,000 New Testament manuscripts and manuscript fragments. Josh McDowell points out that when counting new archeological discoveries the number of MSS is over 66,000.
- 5,795 of these Greek manuscripts are dated from 30-150 years of the events they describe.
- Over 7,974 MSS in other languages are dated from 100–150 years of the events they describe.
- Over 10,000 MSS in Latin are dated from 300-350 years of the events they describe.
- Why should we accept "secular" history based on inferior evidence, and reject "religious" history based on better evidence? History is history!

H. G. Wells was an unbeliever who died Aug. 13, 1946. His last literary effort was the gloomy and pessimistic "Mind at the end of it's Tether". Here, however, is what he wrote about Jesus in the

July, 1922 issue of American Magazine: *“Jesus of Nazareth . . . is easily the dominant figure in history. I am speaking of Him, of course, as a man, for I conceive that the historian must treat Him as a man, just as the painter must paint Him as a man. To assume that He never lived, that the accounts of his life are inventions, is more difficult and raises more problems in the path of the historian that to accept the essential elements of the Gospel stories as fact . . . So, the historian disregarding the theological significance of His life, writes the name of Jesus of Nazareth at the top of the world’s greatest characters”.*

Yes! Jesus of Nazareth is easily “the dominant figure in history”. The dates lines of the world bend around the manger of His birth. Not only does Jesus dramatically influence our modern world, He also influenced the world before He was born. Every major aspect of his birth, life, death, and resurrection were predicted in the Hebrew Scriptures centuries before He was born.

- The essence of the Gospel is that Jesus lived, died, and was resurrected according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The fulfillment of prophecy adds a new dimension to the evidence we have for His life, death, burial, and resurrection.
- Jesus emphasized: “Search the Scriptures . . . they are they which testify of me” (Jn. 5:39).
- Jesus also pointed out: **“all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me”**(Lk. 24:44).
- Jesus rebuked two of His disciples for not recognizing what the prophets had written: **“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”**(Lk. 24:27).
- In defense of His own Deity Jesus said: **“For had you believed Moses, you would have believed in me, for he wrote of me** (Jn. 5:46).
- Peter pointed out: **“To him gave all the prophets witness”** (Acts 10:43).
- Philip told Nathanael: **“We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth** (Jn. 1:45).
- John wrote in the book of Revelation: **“The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy”** (Rev. 19:10).
- This is not a small matter or peripheral issue for over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament Scriptures have been fulfilled by Jesus!

EVERY TIME YOU READ OR WRITE DOWN WHAT YEAR IT IS, THINK OF JESUS!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce