

Expository Files 3.4 April 1996

THE FRONT PAGE

by Jon W. Quinn

The quote went this way: “I find it remarkable, indeed extraordinary, that 2,000 years after he lived, a Jewish peasant from Nazareth continues to be such a towering figure.” This statement was made at a symposium of experts (of course) at Oregon State University and sent via closed-circuit TV to universities around the world. Another quote; this one a searching question: “Why did he become the single most important person in the history of Western culture?” I would like to have had an opportunity to tell them the answer; because while I may not be the expert that they are, I know the answer to the question that they are asking! But my answer would probably had been greeted with the same skepticism as Paul's announcement of the resurrection on Mar's Hill in ancient Athens (Acts 17:31,32).

This is because I believe what the Bible says about Jesus. They do not, for the most part. They are searching for what they call “the historical Jesus”. Marcus Borg, professor of religion at Oregon State put it this way: the human “pre-Easter” Jesus (The Jesus of the Bible was also “pre-Easter” in the sense of how it is observed in our day. During Bible times, Easter was a pagan holiday, having nothing at all to do with the worship of Jehovah by Jews or Christians).

These scholars hold that “if TV crews had been assigned to cover the life of Jesus of Nazareth, a significant number of his words and deeds and some of the most important episodes of the Christian faith that are found in the gospels of the New Testament wouldn't show up on their video tape - because they weren't said or didn't happen.”

Sounds to me like they are calling the eyewitnesses liars (stupid liars, too, since the eyewitnesses gave up everything, including their lives, teaching what we read in the gospels as fact!).

The report, taken from the Chicago Tribune, Feb. 18, 1996, continues by saying, “Yet the scholars also emphasize that this does not mean that such accounts are not true, for even the stories that did not occur as reported impart essential truths about the way Jesus affected and was perceived by his earliest followers.”

Pardon me for saying so, but I've lost all confidence in these learned men and women because they obviously do not know what the word “true” means. How can saying Jesus said “I am the

way” still be true if He did not really say it? They say He did not really claim to be the Son of God and that He was not really raised... but “this does not mean that such accounts are not true.”

I guess you have to be as smart as they are to figure this one out. I'm not.