



# Historical Jesus: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?

*By Anthony Le Donne*

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**Historical Jesus: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?** By Anthony Le Donne

Historical Jesus asks two primary questions: What does “historical” mean? and How should we apply this to Jesus?

Anthony Le Donne begins with the unusual step of considering human perception ? how sensory data from sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell are interpreted from the very beginning by what we expect, what we’ve learned, and how we categorize the world. In this way Le Donne shows how historical memories are initially formed. He continues with the nature of human memory and how it interacts with group memories. Finally, he offers a philosophy of history and uses it to outline three dimensions from the life of Jesus: his dysfunctional family, his politics, and his final confrontation in Jerusalem.

This little book is ideal for those with no background in religious studies ? even those with no faith ? who wish to better understand who Jesus was and how we can know what we do know about him.

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**Bibliography**

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

“This very readable and provocative book should provide an invigorating agenda for many discussion groups, particularly if they want to grapple seriously with postmodern views of history and the role of memory in recording the impact which Jesus made on his disciples.”

? James D. G. Dunn

University of Durham

“In their obsession with authenticating individual sayings of Jesus as precious artifacts of a unique individual teacher, modernist mainline questers for the historical Jesus have ignored that Jesus must have communicated with followers. They have thus ignored the necessity of understanding oral communication and social memory in a distinctive historical context. Anthony Le Donne is one of the first to take both oral communication and social memory seriously. He takes some key steps toward rethinking how we might have knowledge of Jesus-in-context through an appreciation of the social memory of Jesus’ followers.”

? Richard Horsley

University of Massachusetts

“A provocative look at the next wave of study of the Jesus of history. Accessible to general readers yet up to date with the latest developments in the field, Le Donne grounds his understanding of Jesus both in ancient sources and in a careful consideration of contemporary philosophy. Appealing to postmodernism as a way to better understand human perception, memory, and narrative, Le Donne gives us a high-tech look at the ancient and early stories of Jesus’ life. He anchors Jesus carefully in the past but allows him to speak meaningfully to the present.”

? Tom Thatcher

Cincinnati Christian University

#### **About the Author**

Anthony Le Donne is assistant professor of New Testament at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio. His other books include *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* and *The Wife of Jesus: Ancient Texts and Modern Scandals*. Visit him on the web at [anthonyledonne.com](http://anthonyledonne.com).

### **Users Review**

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##### **Theodore Stewart:**

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