

Weyler, Rex. *The Jesus Sayings: The Quest for His Authentic Message.* Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2008.

Rex Weyler (1947 - ____) resides in Vancouver, British Columbia. Weyler has long been deeply involved with New Age spirituality. He co-authored the New Age classic, *Chop Wood, Carry Water: A Guide to Finding Spiritual Fulfillment in Everyday Life*. Weyler is a founder of the Greenpeace organization. He works as a journalist, author, and ecological activist. Weyler emigrated from the United States to Canada. He has written of Greenpeace's whale campaigns, in the first of which he participated, music tuning theory, and pacifist theory, in which his own photography was employed. Weyler co-founded Hollyhock Educational Center on Cortes Island in British Columbia. Weyler and his wife foster displaced teens.

Maps of the Roman world and first-century Palestine.

Timeline of the Jesus Record. The dates in this chronology reflect the presumed composition dates of various books, not the date of their first extant manuscripts. The timeline covers the period from 5,000 B.C. to the present, and reflects critical developments in the historical record and interpretation of Jesus' sayings. The sections of the timeline are:

- I. Ancient influences on the Jesus stories,
- II. Life and death of Jesus (7 B.C. - 30 A.D.),
- III. Jesus' legacy remembered, recorded, redacted (30 A.D. – 130),
- IV. Gospel wars: eighty factions of Jesus followers, Roman supremacy (100-430),
- V. Medieval and modern understanding of Jesus (350-present).

Introduction: A Real Jesus. Weyler tells of commingling Jesus and Santa Claus in his mind as a toddler in Wyoming. Weyler had, as a child, two religious heroes who lived lives of transparent spirituality: his deeply Catholic and generous grandmother and St. Francis of Assisi, who established an order that to this day lives without personal possessions. In adolescence, Weyler entertained common doubts about his faith, troubled by the exclusivity of the gospel, people who never heard the gospel being damned, the fate of dead babies. Weyler was helped by Catholic catechism regarding Aquinas's version of limbo for unbaptized innocents, which sidesteps the issue inelegantly. Weyler recounts the genocide of Cathar heretics by Innocent III, and subsequent inquisitions and annihilations by the Catholic church. How did the church go so wrong, and what happened to the message of Jesus? What, in fact, was the authentic message of Jesus?

Weyler began studying spirituality, and co-authored *Chop Wood, Carry Water*, which text conducts an overview of human wisdom and its application to western culture.

This book explores events surrounding Jesus and his message and mission. Events of Jesus' life were transmitted orally for forty years, then memorialized in four interdependent gospels that render inconsistent accounts. These gospels were transmitted with revisions for centuries, all of which manuscripts are lost until three centuries later. Dissenters (Marcion, Bogomils, and Cathars) and heterodox versions (Gospels of Thomas, Mary, and Philip) were suppressed. Modern scholars sought, beneath the morass of hagiography, the historical Jesus (Reimarus, Schweitzer). Weyler aims to consider the answers and investigations of modern scholars and the Jesus Seminar and Jesus Project in answering this question: What can a reasonable man know of the man Jesus and his message? Weyler will follow up with consideration of how the message got muddled, and what, if anything, Jesus' thoughts offer us.

Karen Armstrong has emphasized that ancient cultures "knew" things by both *mythos* and *logos*, that is, by legend and parable or metaphor and by reasoned examination. First-century minds were more adept with *mythos* than are we, dominated as we are by science and rational schemes. Gospels are not history, but encouraging stories. Believing tangibly false stories harms no one, unless used as a pretext for violence. Every person uses both myth and reason to grasp truth. We look behind both for human drama and challenge.

Ethical probity does not depend upon religious doctrine for its development. The information age opens wisdom traditions to all. One need not eat a religion's whole meal to savor its flavorful meats. Weyler will consider 200 sources that may or may not reveal Jesus' authentic message.

1. **Witness.** Seeking the authentic sayings of Jesus requires a lot of historical insight. First, the earliest documentary evidence of a gospel is P52, a papyrus fragment from about 120 A.D. probably containing fragments of the Gospel of John. Weyler tells the story of Tischendorf's discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus, a complete Old and New Testament manuscript dating from 350 A.D. Weyler notes that northern Israelites (a name reserved for the northern tribal affiliations) and Judeans (a name reserved for groups associated with Jacob's fourth son) did not necessarily get along. Their religions, while associated, were not identical. Pilate's question to Jesus (Are you king of the Jews?) may have asked if Jesus claimed to lead southern urban Judeans. Pliny the Younger complained to Emperor Trajan around 112 A.D. of executing children and servant girls for refusal, based on their superstition about Christus, to offer required obeisance to Roman gods or the emperor. Neither the Talmud nor the Dead Sea Scrolls mentions Jesus. Roman historian Tacitus mentions, around 115 A.D., that Roman Christians were wrongly accused when Nero sought to deflect allegations that Nero set Rome ablaze. Tacitus records briefly Christus's execution by Pontius Pilate during Tiberius's reign. In Jewish historian Josephus, writing around 90 A.D., Jesus, is mentioned briefly. But these passages are controversial, and certainty about the authenticity is elusive. From early historical writings, we learn nothing of Jesus' teachings. Some scholars deny Jesus historical existence. Others (Reimarus, Jefferson, Schweitzer) believe we must sift the chaff of the New Testament to unearth the grain of Jesus' teachings. Some include extra-canonical materials, such as the gospels of Mary and Thomas, as sources for such teachings. Regardless, the earliest mention of Jesus in historical sources comes from Saul of Tarsus, the Paul of New Testament epistles.

2. **Saul of Tarsus.** According to Acts, Saul of Tarsus stood by approving while the church's first martyr, Stephen, was stoned to death. Upon his conversion to the Jesus community, Paul was ill-received. Disputes arose over dietary restrictions and circumcision, which were partially resolved. Paul stood alone outside the Jerusalem group of Jesus' followers and family. Weyler speculates that Jesus was a "Nazorean" (member of an ascetic separatist sect), not a "Nazarene" (person from Nazareth).

The early heritage of Jesus was hotly contested, with many groups vying for control of the message. At root, Paul's gospel deviates from that of Jesus. It is addressed to educated urbanites, not the rural poor audience Jesus sought and nurtured. This divergence continues into church history. Pauline doctrine displaces Jesus' emphases in the long run. Jefferson called Paul the first corrupter of the teachings of Jesus. Paul's letters show little interest in the Jesus of Palestine, and do not look to Jesus' teachings as the fount of Paul's authority.

Weyler recounts the history of the name "Jesus," deriving from Aramaic for Savior, and then its subsequent medieval and modern development. Weyler uses "Yeshua" to indicate the historical Galilean teacher of the poor. These, he argues, did not view Yeshua as a messiah or god, but rather as their teacher. His spirit was a parousia, a spiritual presence among them, not a physical resurrection. There were five other "messiahs" between 4 B.C. and 70 A.D, whom Weyler lists.

Paul had personal wealth, and was distrusted by the early churches in handling theirs. Perhaps these concerns were groundless. Certainly, there was doubt. Paul's Jesus differs from that of Jesus' friends. Paul only once quotes Jesus, and that does not accord with the other accounts. Tarsus was a center of Persian Mithraism. Mithras was believed to be a son of god, born of a virgin around the winter solstice, part of a holy trinity, and visited by shepherds bearing gifts. Mithras held a last supper with his twelve disciples at which they ate bread and imbibed wine. There is borrowing here [and possibly cross-borrowing]. Paul may have slid Jesus into the Mithras story. Paul's accounts neglect the historical Jesus, so busy was Paul proclaiming his own ideas.

3. **Down by the River.** John the Baptist sidestepped Jerusalem sacrificial worship, offering a cheap, accessible alternative in baptism. Jesus was John's protégé. The current pope, Benedict XVI, wrote a history of Jesus which accepts the gospel stories at face value. Scholars approach the gospel texts more critically. John the Baptist is attested in the secular historical record. All the church canon places John and Jesus meeting early in Jesus' ministry.

Weyler considers the various canonical and extra-canonical versions of the story of John and Jesus interacting. The Baptist stories, when analyzed, teach one that such events grow mixed with metaphors, which, while rendering the text something less than history, nevertheless communicate a sense of the underlying personalities. Thematic elements emerge: confuting authorities, assisting the lower classes, virtue and its absence.

Josephus's account of John the Baptizer is oddly sympathetic to the mystic, given Josephus's penchant for fawning over society's upper echelons. The Baptist was a decidedly lower class phenomenon. According to the gospels, John ran afoul of the Herodians, who ruled Palestine, by criticizing the incestuous marriages and quiet assassinations of the line. According to Josephus, John was executed because he might have raised a rebellion. Weyler sides with Josephus. John heralded an apocalyptic judgment from Yahweh coming in a person other than John. John called for good acts, not mere form. Jesus revised his message after his time in the desert alone: he began consorting with prostitutes and tax collectors, and advised his poor constituents to help one another. While not denying John's apocalyptic vision, Jesus downplayed it.

In ferreting out reliable from unreliable historical allegations, scholars use embarrassment, corroboration, convergence, and textual chronological priority and subsequent redaction (also called literary dependence) as criteria.

4. **Child in the Kingdom.** Weyler sets the stage for exploring the sayings of Jesus by explaining the synoptic problem, the Q hypothesis, and the rules of 19th century German textual analysis in New Testament studies. He describes the discovery of ancient source texts in Egyptian deserts, preserved by their baked aridity. Weyler recounts the Oxyrynchus papyri discovery, and the fragmentary sayings of Jesus contained in the Gospel of Thomas (a complete copy of which was discovered at Nag Hammadi). Weyler presents six sayings of Jesus from the Gospel of Thomas, which mirror with slight divergences texts in Matthew and Luke. One should look, under this complexity, for the signature twist of thinking that characterizes an individual. Weyler summarizes the teachings of Jesus in his interpretation of the evidence. Jesus urged modesty, the inner light and proclaiming it, involvement with others, humility, focus on other matters than worldly goods, and wariness about spiritual leaders. Ancient writers borrowed and reframed earlier materials freely, without concerns about plagiarism or distortion that guide modern authors. Weyler recounts the history of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts through private hands to the Coptic Museum. Weyler believes the Thomas logia represent the earliest sayings of Jesus concerning the kingdom of God.¹ Weyler identifies Thomas logia he believes are reliable because they are represented in both the Q sayings and in Mark. Weyler believes [having accepted the Gnostic twist of the Thomas logia] that it is looking within that enlightens, and self-knowledge, not faith, moves mountains. Weyler takes the mustard seed logia as foundational, since it is represented in all three synoptics and Thomas. Weyler concludes that nowhere does Jesus anticipate a future apocalyptic kingdom, nor does Jesus expect there to be a future historical event of divine judgment. *[This view could hardly be more misdirected.]* The kingdom of God, according to Weyler's Jesus, is here and now, and resides among the poor.

¹ [For this assertion, I find no compelling evidence. Certainly the oral traditions of some of the Thomas sayings link to Jesus himself, since they correspond to logia contained in the synoptics. But much else in the collection of Thomas has, at least superficially, a much later origin. Thomas appears dependent upon knowledge of synoptic sayings, conflating some. Many scholars find literary dependence upon both Luke and John, the latest of the gospels, composed late in the first century or early to mid-second century. The Gnostic influences in Thomas are also late, and its occasional deeply Hellenized viewpoint is unlikely in the mouth of a Galilean peasant. Thomas also lacks an apocalyptic perspective, which is one of the most patent features of the sayings of the Son of man. Weyler's decision that the Thomas logia are early and reliable is unfortunate, because he relies heavily on the Gnostic influenced Thomas logia throughout.]

5. **Into the Towns.** Galilee was ethnically diverse, at odds with both its neighbors and the Judeans southward. The message of Jesus begins to emerge: 1) Jesus addressed himself to his peasant neighbors. Weyler argues for a late date for the composition of the gospel of Mark, and places the compilation of the Thomas sayings very early. Weyler dismisses the gospel of John as late and offering little in his search for the authentic Jesus. The poor have an advantage in entering the kingdom; wealth hobbles the rich. 2) Understanding leads to action. 3) Commit now and fully. Weyler argues that Jesus believed that a good society could replace the corrupt one that exists if only normal people would act ethically. The diverse uses to which first century writers put Jesus' sayings are described. 4) The kingdom lies within you. Be humble, and accept sacrifices your task requires of you. Speak and teach. Be generous and show mercy. Heal, love more widely than your family, tell others of the kingdom, and avoid manmade rules and the rulers who impose them. 5) Money is dangerous. A staff and sandals mark one as a person of philosophical bent or money or authority. Own neither. Weyler explores the idea whether Jesus may have been influenced by Cynic sages, and concludes that if so, Jesus distinguished himself from them. Jesus' disciples differed from Cynic sages in their reliance on one another and formed groups, given to addressing the needs of the poor directly. Weyler summarizes what he takes to be the pre-Markan core of Jesus' teaching [which summary is marred by his belief that the Thomas logia are very early in origin.] Jesus' message, before the gospel writers took charge of it, was one of common decency of societal scope. The church purged the feminine voice from the New Testament. The Gospel of Mary of Magdala, discovered among the Oxyrhynchus papyri, remedies this excision.

6. **The Magdalene.** The gospel of Mary the Magdalene was probably written in the early second century A.D. in Egypt. Weyler argues that the church patriarchs suppressed the feminine perspective in the canon. Weyler projects his image of Jesus into the Gospel of Mary, with references to the Gospel of Thomas, and notes that these later works differ in their portrayal of Jesus as compared to the synoptics. Weyler likens Mary's message to that of eastern Buddhists and Brahmanists, and takes these voices to reflect very early Christian thought, not late perversions of Jesus' teachings. The early church's objections to the many rank revisions of Jesus is contained in the Gospel of Mary, where Andrew says that her teaching does not sound like Jesus. This, according to Weyler, reflects conflict within the early church over traditional versus innovative views of Jesus, and bias against women as teachers and interpreters of Jesus. Weyler explores the various "Mary" figures of the Old and New Testaments. Substantial confusion about their various identities exists. Weyler believes that women were among Jesus' inner circle of disciples, but were purged from those roles by patriarchal prejudices of later leaders. Weyler scans the role of women in ancient cultures. He hypothesizes that, before the rise of the monarchical state, men and women shared authority and leadership. Thereafter, women were demoted. Weyler recounts pagan rituals and gods, noting similarities in some rituals to the humiliation of Jesus on his last day. Weyler speculates about the origins of the name Magdalene. Weyler, in summary, believes that the non-canonical sources show that Mary was a beloved disciple of Jesus, as were the men Jesus chose. [This is highly speculative casting about for feminist fodder.]

7. **Kingdom of Decency.** Weyler recounts the rural island-bound morality and compassion of his childhood home. He lays homelessness and moral indifference and poverty to urbanism. Weyler recounts the early literature's development: before 50 A.D., the letters of Paul. ~50 A.D., Thomas and Q. [This dating of Thomas is spurious.] ~50-60 A.D., Gospel of the Hebrews. ~60-80 A.D., Mark, the Gospel of the Egyptians. [This is a late date for Mark and early date for the plainly Hellenized Gospel of the Egyptians.] ~80-100 A.D., Matthew and Luke, Dialogue of the Savior, Gospel of Peter. ~90-120 A.D., John, Gospel of Mary, Apocalypse of James, Barnabas. Weyler summarizes Jesus' message: find guidance within yourself, tell the world about it, be charitable, avoid wealth and violence, avoid rules, and heal the ill. [Note the excision of all Son of man apocalypticism.] The passion stories diverge widely in their details, as one should expect of orally transmitted materials. Weyler examines

the work of Soards in evaluating the historicity of the passion narrative, finding that the core events compare favorably with usual Roman procedures, but many details appear to be folkloric. Scholars use several principles to sort out sayings authentic to Jesus: 1) Jesus spoke no later Christian doctrines, 2) Jesus did not know later historical events, 3) no one recorded conversations where no human auditor was present, 4) was the saying common to Jesus' ethos?, and 5) embarrassment to later writers. Weyler describes the work of John Dominic Crossan in *The Historical Jesus*, and the Jesus Seminar. Weyler recounts the sayings they deem most authentic. Jesus, according to Weyler, innovated by turning wisdom talk into an appeal for social action and unconditional generosity. Weyler analyzes the crowd feeding miracle stories. He speculates that Jesus' message was that when we share, there is enough for all. In considering Jesus' healing, Weyler concludes that all talk of Satan or demons is a later intrusion into the Jesus narrative, deriving from Zoroastrian and Greek sources. (Weyler later waffles on this view, concluding that Jesus may well have believed in demons.) Weyler considers the modern view of faith healing. Contemporary doctors acknowledge the psychological and social components of disease and healing. Weyler expands on Thiessen's construction of Jesus' wandering ministry as social equality without authorization.

8. **On Whose Authority?** Oral history transmits mythos, not facticity. Weyler recounts the parable of the unforgiving slave. From this Weyler concludes that Jesus taught unconditional forgiveness. [Weyler fails to see that his predilection for a judgment-less Jesus causes him to seek this interpretation.] Weyler spends several pages explaining how Jesus saw himself as a normal person, like any other person. The designation "Son of man" indicates humility. Weyler interprets the Daniel 7 Son of man passages, finding no necessary apocalyptic meaning in them. Jesus, according to Weyler, taught that all men have authority within themselves to decide matters. Weyler recounts the gods of Palestine: El, YHVH, Aten, Ahura Mazda. Weyler concludes that Jesus' "God the Father" was not a lone and dominating god. The multiple gods worshipped by early Israel in Palestine are synthesized into YHVH by combining Abrahamic El northern gods with Mosaic YHVH southern gods and their consorts. Weyler wishes Jesus did not believe in demons or struggle with Satan, and attempts to interpret the difficult passages concerning such allegorically. Weyler analyzes Jesus' salt sayings, and compares them to Vedic sayings. He notes that Jesus did not feel specially obligated to interpret his parables for his audience. Weyler compares Jesus sayings with Buddhist logia, noting similarities. He concludes that Vedic-Buddhist and Jesus thoughts flow from a common source in human wisdom. Weyler does the same sort of comparison for Lao Tzu.
9. **Battle for the Legacy.** Palestine was troubled by rebels through the decades of Jesus' ministry and for decades thereafter. Ultimately, Titus leveled Rome and every fortified Jewish stronghold in 70 A.D. Jews were banned from Palestine; Jerusalem Jews were killed or enslaved. Jewish, and Jewish Christian, enclaves hung on barely. During the second century, communities remained enclaves and the transmission of texts and leading lights of the day remain obscure. We know some names only from later writers. Weyler considers the theology of Ignatius of Antioch's seven letters to the second century church. In those letters, Ignatius claims Roman supremacy over Jesus' message. Weyler discussed Polycarp, who wrote to the church at Philippi, and evidences a deeply Pauline point of view. Eusebius asserts that Polycarp knew John Zebedee, disciple of Jesus. The account is likely spurious. There is little reliable historical evidence from the second century. In the third century, the martyrdom of Polycarp contains nascent trinitarianism and the descent-from-apostles theory of Roman apostolic authority. The Roman church sought to crush theological deviants, who numbered eighty or more. Weyler considers the Ebionites, who rejected the divinity of Jesus and the efficacy of faith alone, insisting rather on the imitation of Jesus' compassionate acts. Gnostic sects wrote secret texts revealed only to devotees. Their worldview was deeply Platonic, with divine sparks trapped in debased flesh. Gnostic communities fought for power with Rome. Lacking a canon, the Jesus story became laden with interpolations of combatants and a comprehensible Jesus began to fade from possibility.

10. **The Emperor's Saviour.** From the battles for the legacy of Jesus emerged the church's canon of texts. Weyler describes briefly the work of Basilides of Alexandria, Marcion, and Carpocrates. The Gospel of Philip teaches that evil emerges when one separates the male and female. All such groups and thinkers (with which Weyler identifies), especially those who believed Jesus merely human, his death not atoning, and their own works as salvific as those of Jesus, suffered at the hands of Roman church authorities. The Roman hierarchy adopted virgin birth (because sex was evil) and a Trinitarian theory (because the Son existed from all time). Weyler traces the Trinitarian concept from a sixteenth century forgery of a fifth century Gnostic note concerning an Egyptian myth about human origins. The gospel of John emerges from a Jewish school, and evidences Gnostic and Hellenistic influences. As time passed, authority over the early church migrated toward Rome. Weyler recounts Celsus's criticisms of the early church during the late second century. Celsus calls the church a conclave of frogs croaking that God created the world for the sole purpose of saving them. The second century church produced much about gods and evil, but nothing new about Jesus. The Galilean was neglected, even ignored. At the time of Constantine in the fourth century, the Roman populace looked to Mithras, Jupiter, and the Christ as saviors. Constantine amalgamated these faiths, defeated his rivals, and encouraged the empire to adopt his version of Christianity. Weyler reiterates his belief that the Gospel of Thomas accurately recounts Jesus' teaching, and laments Cyril's edict to demote that collection of sayings. Weyler recounts the Arian debates, whether Christ was *homoiousian* (like god) or *homoousian* (sharing a substance with god). The Arian debate raged for years, but was resolved by the Council of Nicaea in 325. Jesus shared god's substance. Arius was condemned and his books burned. Shortly, all non-authorized gospels disappeared, consigned to flame. The twenty-seven books of the New Testament were settled by Athanasius's letter of 367 A.D. The Roman church, hand in hand with the emperor, crushed all dissent and burned the books of heretics. Weyler briefly [and with little sympathy] recounts Augustine's conversion and theological emphases: Roman authority, original sin, grace, and just war theory. Jesus was lost, buried in Egyptian sands of aberrant gospels, lately to be discovered, despite the Roman purge. We can now hear Jesus again.

11. **Voice of the Galilean.** After hearing John the Baptist's message, Jesus concluded that people create the kingdom of God by seeking their inner light, speaking up, and helping others. The real heaven lies in human action here and now, a vision for which one may well suffer. Weyler recounts Jesus' events for which scholars find evidence: Galilean birth, Jewish heritage, devotee of John the Baptist, Capernaum, teaching around Galilee, confrontations with Jerusalem authorities, a Temple hubbub, Roman execution, and peasant burial. Jesus taught peasants to find the kingdom in themselves, and treat one another with common decency. The Jesus Seminar warns that one should not expect a comfortable Jesus to emerge from one's examination of the sources. Weyler repeats his belief that "son of man" means "human," not the apocalyptic Son of man of Daniel's vision. Culling the historical Jesus from the ecclesiastical detritus allows one to set Jesus alongside other axial age thinkers.

Jesus' message was:

The kingdom of God is for peasants. Riches distract one from the kingdom. The kingdom is for children. Innocents find it within themselves, like a light. Discovering their light, they tell others. Citizens of the Father take nothing along their journey. They receive from others and give in their turn. They heal others by giving to and encouraging them. Do not imitate the religious authorities; they mislead you. Love enemies. Give more than asked. Do not sue others. Settle conflicts among yourselves. Your neighbor's problems are little splinters; yours are huge logs. The kingdom is hidden in your midst. Look for it. Keep your insides clean, and reap treasures in heaven, where things do rot or wither. Don't listen to lawyers tell you about your sins. You know your sins. They violate your nature. Start finding the kingdom now. Nothing is more important—not children, not wives, not parents. Split loyalties kill the heart. When you do this, your family may reject you. Remember: the small will be great; the great small. Seek purity of spirit.

Weyler argues of Jesus' social program, first, that Jesus was willing to let his hearers entertain their own ideas about god. He welcomed women as disciples, based on the Gospel of Mary, Thomas, and the Sophia of Jesus Christ [All apocryphal.] In rejecting ritual purity, Jesus adopted self-knowledge and public social action as criteria of spiritual purity. Second, Jesus forgave unconditionally and by such forgiveness is the kingdom effectuated. Weyler disparages the idea that god acts to create the kingdom as later intrusions into Jesus' words. Third, Jesus healed on his own authority and encouraged followers to do the same. He resisted creating a franchise, and all forms of external privilege (even that of his family). The ability to exercise personal authority derives from self-awareness. That is the first step in becoming an agent for cultural change. Spirituality is measured by the change it produces. Fourth, Jesus advocated sharing, here and now.

Jesus and his message deserve examination. His view belongs in the pool of spiritual wisdom from which we all drink. This is a real reformation—to recover and hear the message of Jesus, canceling the noise of the church's manifold intervening errors. If we listen, we may recover simple living, human decency, affection for one another, and care for the planet. Jesus lives in the deeds of those who do.

APPENDICES: THE CORE JESUS SAYINGS

- I. **The *Thomas, Mark, & Q* (Luke/Matthew) Convergence.** Weyler lists the sayings of Jesus represented in Q, Thomas, and Mark.
- II. **The Earliest Widely Attested Sayings from the John Dominic Crossan Inventory.** Weyler lists thirty ideas of Jesus before 60 A.D. attested in three or more independent sources.
- III. **The Highest-Ranked Sayings from the Jesus Seminar.** Weyler lists the top thirty sayings of Jesus as ranked by the fellows of the Westar Institute.
- IV. **Misconceptions.** Weyler lists eight Jesus sayings borrowed from other sources [some of which are doubtful], as well as concepts he believes entered Judaism from other cultures and were not original to Jesus. Weyler lists five concepts adopted by the later church (Christos, atonement, original sin, salvation by belief in messiah, and all male disciples and priests), which are not found in the Jesus sayings.