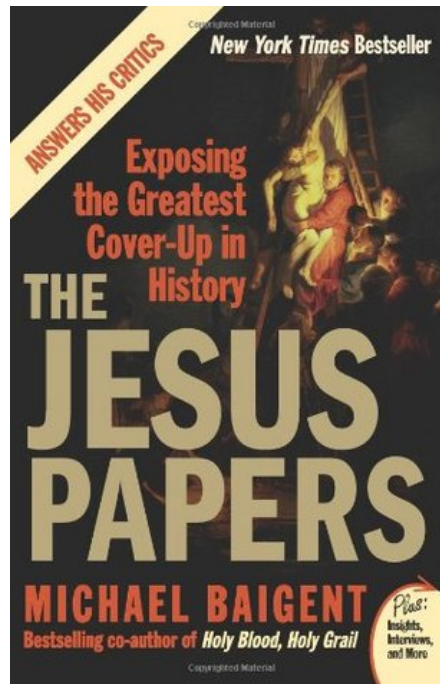




The Jesus Papers: Exposing the Greatest Cover-up in History (Plus)

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What if everything we have been told about the origins of Christianity is a lie?

What if a small group had always known the truth and had kept it hidden . . . until now?

What if there is evidence that Jesus Christ survived the crucifixion?

In *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* Michael Baigent and his co-authors Henry Lincoln and Richard Leigh stunned the world with a controversial theory that Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene married and founded a holy bloodline. The book became an international publishing phenomenon and was one of the sources for Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code*. Now, with two additional decades of research behind him, Baigent's *The Jesus Papers* presents explosive new evidence that challenges everything we know about the life and death of Jesus.

The Jesus Papers: Exposing the Greatest Cover-up in History (Plus) Details

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Michael Baigent**

From Reader Review The Jesus Papers: Exposing the Greatest Cover-up in History (Plus) for online ebook

Lucinda Reed-Nowland says

I like it from the historical aspect, not because this is some profound piece or that it exposes any kind of cover up.

He presents an interesting case here, with some very different ideas to put forth about the Christian church and the beliefs of Jesus Christ, although he does have some evidence, it is speculative and highly hypothetical. I say it is interesting, because it seems the best word, since it sparks some thought, even if the reader doesn't buy into anything he says. This would probably be offensive to some, and downright ridiculous to others, as it presents an argument against the divinity of Christ and many of the key Christian beliefs concerning the Christ. I recommend this to those who research the historical Christ, but don't look for a satisfying argument here.

gina says

Okay, first it's a bit of a stretch to call this the biggest cover up in history. I mean, there's a lot of history in the world to cover and saying that these papers and scrolls are the biggest cover ups is, well, a bit egotistical or pretentious of Mr. Baigent, first as a "scholar" and second as a Christian, wait, is he a Christian? What is he anyway? Well, he certainly hates the church. Or at least his writings come across as very church-hating. That's I guess a big "C" on "Church" if you know what I mean... if you don't, then you will 30 minutes or so into the audiobook because he makes it pretty clear who he thinks the big delusional losers are. Actually his entire book sounds a whole lot like a kid standing out in the yard at recess and calling a bigger kid a "big stupid liar" or "a big fat loser!" and then making your mamma jokes. Except they aren't that funny and they kind of get old. But I was amused to hear his theories. He seems to make as many leaps in assumptions and rationalizing as the Church had, just in a different direction, but he seems unable to see his own assumptions as just that, assumptions, not fact. I do think he's on to something with a lot of what he says, but despite his chest thumping confident tones I'm not quite ready to dismiss other ideas and jump on his Jesus Paper Bandwagons. And despite if I decided to believe his..."facts" on the matter (which come across smelling alot like specuation to me) I didn't like how he presented them. It was his tone. It was his chest thumping. His ego and crazed fanatic vibe.

Anyway, interesting to listen to and ponder, but overall I'd say it's just "ok" :)

Jim McCulloch says

Attempting to reconcile proven historic fact to the Bible is difficult at best, but an interesting exercise where historic fact can be established. Establishing the political realities of the time of Jesus was most helpful, as was considering where the young Jesus was raised and trained. It was a harsh, violent, and tumultuous time.

Mr. Baigent raises some interesting ideas and certainly fans the flames of papal conspiracy in the story of Jesus. The timing of the writing of the gospels and subsequent potential revisions by the church is

interesting. According to the author, comparing third century with first century versions of the same gospels shows that someone changed portions of them, and it is natural to wonder who and why. Baignet's contention that our current New Testament may be different than how things actually played out and were spoken by Jesus due to the centuries it took to be actually written down, and the multiple translations the texts had to endure creates a reasonable hypothesis of potential human intervention for many purposes. Then there are the church decisions as to which books would actually be included in the New Testament, excluding the Gnostic texts which is critical when you consider the authors asserts that Jesus was trained by Gnostics. All in all, some valid concern for devious and very mortal influence into what is presented by churches as the true word of God.

I suspect believers who lack the courage to think outside the lines will find this book to be horrible and straight from the devil. Those with the curiosity to consider alternative historic interpretations, church intervention, the use of science to date items, and the contents of newly discovered ancient texts will find it intellectually stimulating without threatening their faith.

As to the alleged Jesus papers. Mr. Baigent didn't convince me that Jesus survived the Crucifixion with what he presented . . . but I would like to see the full translated text in their proper context, and learn more about why he and others think it refers to Jesus.

Raymond says

I must first admit some bias. In spite of being raised (and indoctrinated) Roman Catholic, the idea of religion as myth is not alien to me. Through my own meditations and readings, I have long accepted the probability. I approached Mr. Baigent's work looking for documentation to support my disbelief. The book's jacket seemed to promise it.

Unfortunately, there was only speculation lacking any back-up evidence. The book is all smoke and no fire. Documents that would allegedly support his theories are, he says, locked up in the Vatican, in private non-accessible collections, or have mysteriously disappeared. Yet, we are encouraged to accept his suppositions as fact.

I can't do it, Mr. Baigent. Blind faith is not a quality I possess.

Still, I would recommend this book to others, particularly true believers. It has a what-if quality that engages the imagination and is eminently readable. Perhaps it would provide a little more flexibility in their habit of judgment. I say *perhaps*.

PuchoAlmighty666 says

Years ago when I was younger, I rented this book from the library out of curiosity. . . well it was boring and the claims, the author made were absurd and laughable.

Anuradha says

Totally speculative claims never backed up with substantial evidence...

In this book Michael Baigent have proposed that Jesus with some help from closest friends and the collision of Roman perfect, Pontius Pilate survived crucifixion. When Joseph of Arimathea went to ask for Jesus's body he had not died. He was taken from the cross and placed in an empty tomb. After treatment they took him out of the tomb and away to safety, to a place (Egypt according to author) where he could recuperate. Like the Davinci connection of Dan Brown this event -the removal of a living Jesus from the tomb -that is depicted in the painted relief of station -14 of the cross in the church of Rennes le Chateau...

Can we really be sure that Jesus of NT existed/resurrected? Is there any proof of thisssss beyond New Testament? New Testament was put together a generation (Mark in 70 AD) after his time. I feel that the whole concept of resurrection is an ancient myth given a new spin? Perhaps it was some rewriting of the Adonis myth or the Osiris myth or the Mithras myth all three were born of a virgin and raised from the dead -a familiar story to Christians.

As the author fails to provide any conclusive evidence it's hard to take Mr. Baigent's ideas seriously ...

Thomas says

"Extremely speculative!! Every single one of the so-called evidence he provides has no base in history whatsoever. Speculative analysis of obscure and made up data along with playing with people's ignorance of the truth is what made this book what it is (as well as farming on the element of doubt this book plants in one's mind as the book progresses.). Conspiracy theories have always been like this... just plain speculation! no more, no less!!

Authors like

Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln are all trying to pocket Dan Brown's loose change.

People who have read this book should read Fabricating Jesus How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels and then try to argue their views from Baigent's book or some of Brown's remarks. "

Deirdre says

This was a fun book to read although I felt the author was a little scattered and tended to go off topic. Although I am not sure his conclusions would withstand close scrutiny it nevertheless provides food for thought whether you are Gentile or Jew, Catholic or Protestant, believer or non-believer.

Brandie says

Okay, here's the thing. The background information he presents was interesting to me. He made a few great points in the book that really made me think. But, let me go on to say, Baigent is trying to show how the NT is maybe not all we think it is - saying they are simply stories contrived to serve specific purposes and don't have the innocent writing background most assume today. Then he goes on to say they are false because there is fact A. And if we assume fact B caused fact A, and then we assume fact C caused fact B and then we do some more assuming, well, that proves this really incredible thing happened instead of what The Bible says. I find a lot of what may have happened just as woven and created, if not more so, than what he says about the Bible. Just my two cents though!

Sarah Crawford says

Notice that the cover of the book depicts Jesus being taken down from the cross, and the blurb says “Exposing the Greatest Cover-Up in History.”

The natural assumption, at least in my mind, is that the entire book is about some kind of cover-up about Jesus not dying on the cross after all.

Wrong.

That's what the book claims, but that part isn't really that very big in the book. The majority of the book deals with various forms of what we call “mystery religions” and their rituals. There are entire chapters which have virtually nothing to do with the “Jesus didn't die on the cross” theme, but deal instead with things like the Dead Sea Scrolls, illicit buying-and-selling of such types of scrolls, and the difficulty of real scholars ever getting to see such artifacts.

The book does have some very interesting information on the political situation of the Jews at the time of Christ, in specific reference to the zealot groups and what they were doing and what they (apparently) expected of Jesus.

The thing is, in this type of a claim, the burden of proof lies on the person making the claim. In other words, the authors should be able to provide reasonable proof that there was some kind of conspiracy to keep Jesus from dying on the cross, to get him down while he was still alive, and then get him to safety.

“Possibilities” are not proof. Making assumptions is not proof. Even stating that such-and-such a document “proves” that Jesus was alive in 45 AD is not proof, since no photos of the documents are ever provided. The reader is expected to take the author's word that such documents exist.

Some of the things the book does cover include (I will only state the points; the authors provide a lot of information to back up each point):

The origin of the idea that the Pope is infallible. (A political move on the part of the Pope Pius IX and his supporters).

The two men who were crucified along with Jesus were not robbers; they were Jewish zealots, the idea that they were robbers being based on poor translation from the original sources.

The placement of Jesus between the two men indicates that Jesus was also considered a Jewish zealot.

Galilee was a hotbed of the zealot movement.

Jesus had two royal blood lines in him. Through his father, Jesus was of the Line of David. Through his mother, he was of the line of Aaron, the high priest.

This would have made Jesus both a king and a spiritual leader, and the zealots wanted to have him lead them.

Jesus was crucified in 36 AD.

Another name for Jesus at the time was “Chrestus,” and the Romans had records of such a man being tried and executed for political crimes.

A lot of what is in the Bible made it there through political considerations more so than spiritual considerations, which is why the Gnostic writings are excluded from the Bible.

Throughout history Popes worked on centralizing their power over the Church. This included the destruction of documents that threatened any of the “official” church beliefs.

The Cathars were a target of hatred on the part of the “official” church.

The Inquisition still exists, but under a different name. It was renamed the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, and the present Pope was the leader of that office for a while.

The Knights Templar were also objects of the Inquisitions hatred.

The “virgin birth” was not part of the original writings, but the writings were interpreted to mean that there was a virgin birth.

Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus made his remark about paying taxes to Rome (pay unto Caesar what is Caesar's, in relation to the coin he was shown), the zealots lost faith in Jesus since they expected him to fully oppose Roman rule. So they decided to get Jesus out of the way until they could find someone else to lead them.

Pilate tried Jesus to satisfy the Zealots. (Pilate's own political position vis-a-vis Rome wasn't all that good). Knowing that Rome would have been upset if Jesus had actually died (since Jesus basically supported Rome in a way since he said Roman taxes should be paid), he arranged with Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin and friend of Jesus, to have Jesus taken down before he died and then have him taken to a cave where he could be treated with medicines.

The sponge soaked with vinegar that was offered Jesus while he was on the cross was not filled with vinegar, but with a drug that would cause unconsciousness and make it appear that Jesus was dead. That would prevent his legs from being broken (to cause quick death), and would set it up so he could be brought down from the cross before he actually would die.

Jesus and his wife left the area to go to Egypt where they could study at a Jewish temple there.

The rest of the book deals with Egyptian spiritual mysteries, how Jesus studied those, and has more of the history of the various scrolls.

As you can see from the listing, the idea of Jesus not dying on the cross is not something discussed until well into the book. The vast majority of the rest of the book could have been published under a different title such as “Ancient Initiation Rites and Journeying to the Other Side” or some such title. There's also too much space taken dealing with the handling of ancient documents and how many of these were destroyed by the Church. It's an important point to make, but it shouldn't take as many pages to do it as the book devoted to the concept.

Other than the material on the zealot movement in Jewish culture, the book is pretty much boring, retreading ground that has already been covered and not really adding anything new. Assumptions do not equal fact. Granted, proving that Jesus did not die on the cross but was saved from it by a Pilate-Joseph of Arimathea conspiracy is probably impossible, but if the documents to prove that have not really been found (or at least

made available to the general public), then the book is unable to prove it's "cover-up" concept.

jcg says

Great fun. A deluge of facts presented in a very readable style. I don't think Baigent pulls all his rambling conjecture together into a tight conclusion, but the whole thing is interesting and engaging.

One flaw in the logic: Baigent states that when a crucified person could no longer support the weight of the body "death by asphyxiation rapidly followed." pg 127. He then speculates that Jesus may have been rendered unconscious by drugs and only appeared to be dead. But if Jesus was unconscious and his body slumped, wouldn't he have rapidly died of asphyxiation? Considerable time must have passed between Jesus losing consciousness and the body being taken down because permission to remove the body had to be obtained from Pilate. Surely the time involved in travelling from Golgotha to Pilate's palace in Jerusalem, waiting for an audience, obtaining permission and then travelling back to Gethsemane would be too long for an unconscious person to survive on the cross.

The first century history is interesting and well presented, bringing together various strands into a convincing restructuring.

Lets hope the ancient manuscripts Baigent claims still exist will be made public one day soon.

David Andrews says

I love a good conspiracy theory - I can't help it, I always have! I remember reading, years ago now, The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail and being absolutely astounded (this was also before Dan Brown turned that work into a plotline for his hit The Da Vinci Code). While every conspiracy theory usually takes a couple of fantastic logical leaps, and Baigent's works typically do as well, I still found The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail to be one of the most convincing bits of theory I'd ever read.

The Jesus Papers, released shortly after the explosion that was The Da Vinci Code, represents a bit more of the same, repackaged and made sleek for a more mainstream audience. It covers, in depth, the ways in which Jesus' story was transformed from one of political rebellion and revolution into an entirely new religion - a religion that would've appeared quite alien to the Jews of Jesus' Judaea.

As a bit of historical compilation, The Jesus Papers is far from the worst account I've read, but as a work of conspiracy theory I found it to be really quite boring. Where The Holy Blood contained new concepts and stunning revelations (or at the very least, felt like it did), The Jesus Papers feels like a rehashing of familiar concepts, with very little additional information tacked on.

We're pretty far removed from the initial publication date of The Holy Blood (first put out in 1982), so it could very well be that The Jesus Papers is a better primer for people wanting to get in on the whole 'Jesus wasn't really crucified and his family lived on' theory, but I still feel like the older work might be the better one.

Nathan says

Baigent's earlier book (Holy Blood, Holy Grail) stirred a lawsuit of plagiarism against The Da Vinci Code. Baigent loves the provocative, and this book followed suit. I suspected I might disagree with him, but I set out to give this author/historian a fair shake.

But his blatant lack of intellectual integrity was overwhelming.

Baigent references "incontrovertible evidence" (pg 7) that Jesus survived the crucifixion and was alive on earth in A.D. 45. With some digging, we find his source: a letter from Rev. Bartlett who in the 1930s heard that his mentor Canon Lilley had been invited by a former student to Saint Sulpice in the 1890s to translate a document which may have come from Abbe Sauniere. Lilley, by the way, is now deceased, and the document is now either "concealed or destroyed."

Really?

I don't mean to get snarky, but a disappeared document that is (at best) three-times removed is "incontrovertible evidence"?

I had a hard time believing Baigent's future claims after that. Yet it grew worse. He spends dozens of pages debunking the Bible as "bad history... inconsistent, incomplete, garbled, and biased" but then turns and makes an argument for Jesus' cross survival based meticulously on a turn of phrase in Mark's gospel (a rare portion, I suppose, that isn't bad history). To top it off, Baigent even briefly questions Jesus very existence, which (if true) negates all of Baigent's own work.

The author does finally acknowledge the difficulty of his "evidence," saying that the date itself (A.D. 45) is "the only part of Bartlett's letter that I can accept without dispute or suspicion" (pg 263). I had to wonder why he waited 250 pages to point that out.

Baigent seems primarily driven not by fact or historical congruity, but by a thirst for conspiracy theory. (I started counting the number of times he wrote, "Could it be that [such and such]?") Just look at the subtitle: "Exposing the Greatest Cover-Up in History."

This book masquerades as scholarship, but I'd put it closer to works on Sasquatch and Area 51:

Mildly entertaining with scant facts.

Fabian Davy says

I had great expectations from this book. If somebody was bold enough to refute the claim of Christianity's greatest man - he must have good reason, and ample proof to back his words. But sadly, it was mostly speculation and elaboration of themes that circled around a central key point. Even the so called proof, said to have existed - were either locked away, secured from any access, or being told of its existence - verbally. I would have forgiven Baigent for this lack of evidence, knowing well that sensitive documents pertaining to religious sensitivity are usually guarded well. And I believe of the conspiracy theories of cover-up. If only that he presented his story well enough without beating too much around an imaginary bush.

There are a few central key points that the book tried to explain. These matters include

- The survival of Jesus Christ, after the crucifixion
- The elaboration of how and where Jesus gained the spiritual insight that guides him during his ministry-ship

- The interpretation of how Jesus is not Son of God, or God but... was Son of God through spirituality (this I like and actually believe!)
- The concept of Messianic prophecy long foretold within the older Jewish faith, before the founding of Christianity
- That Christianity is a religion that was founded based on interpretation of its followers, most which of which the teachings were either doctored or strayed. This is also something which I agreed personally.

Of course they were others. But too much to elaborate in this limited review space. All in all in tried to tie up the loose ends of Christianity, with specific relation to Catholicism and the influence of the Vatican over the years. In particular note, I like the heavily discussed influence and history of Judaism and The Jews over the shaping-course of Christianity. Something I must admit - was largely ignored of deprived of knowledge in (even) modern Christians of today. To understand religion is to understand history - a feat that this book tried hard and in some ways, succeeded. If only, it was told with credible source and truth.

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I guess one of the reasons why this book didn't really put me into 'shock gear' - lie on the failure of the author to elaborate more on points of interest. Either from a scientific perspective, or from presenting convincing evidence to support a claim. For example, the idea that Jesus survived the crucifixion was interesting, but the mention of how he could have appeared dead after being given a special medicinal mixture was not elaborated much. What kind of potion mix, what were the possible ingredients, were they locally available at the time, the mechanism of action - were all explained in a rather passing through methodology. Perhaps the most puzzling part - the physical threshold of human being nailed and left hanging on the cross was not explored through medical or scientific means. I have read and watched a discussion of this matter in a more detailed presentation - all which were absent in the book. From this perspective ALONE, Baigent failed miserably on this aspect. The idea of dying at the stake and resurrected is a fundamental element of faith in Christianity. Something which Baigent tried to refute but didn't bother enough to cover in more depth.

He did however, explored the idea of Jesus being 'whisked' away from the tomb, alive. I have no problem on entering this territory. The hinting 'evidence' that explored the possibility of an arranged inside job was interesting. But then again, there were little supported theory of where he could have been after his survival. If Baigent can prove that there was documented life of Jesus after this event, an evidence of his further teachings of ministry anywhere in this face of the earth - I will be very impressed. But no, there is none.

Another problem that I found prevalent in the book, was the straying of discussion into something not on path of interest. The chapters on Egypt for example was largely on the lecture of early theological belief of the Pharaoh's. Two chapters devoted to Egypt, and none really explained the real relationship or significance of this matter - to Jesus Christ. It was theorized by Baigent that Jesus may have been to Egypt during his earlier years - of which it was here that his spiritual basis was founded. Yet, the topic of Egypt steered too much of course into early mystical belief system and its similarity of the different set of religion of the time. This was a distraction that to me, served as fillers that didn't tell the reader very much of what we need to know. Just a historical lesson (which while educational and of valued importance) that didn't fit too well into the picture.

Perhaps that was the biggest problem of this book: too much historical lesson and building of foundation.

~

All was not lost. While this book failed to moved me from questioning the foundation of Christianity, it got me thinking of other equally important issues.

- Infallibility of the earlier Roman Catholic Church and their adamant intent of keeping the idea of

Christianity towards their definition. Sometimes through questionable matters of persecution, cover-up and refusal to submit to criticism. An idea that somehow the true foundation of religion was reshaped according to the need of these select few.

- The radical means of controlling heresy or infidelity or blasphemy through the dreaded means of The Inquisition. It is crucial to understand and know this fact: Christianity was once controlled and kept 'sacrosanct' by a ruthless organization/entity that inhumanely turned to violence, torture and murder. All in the name of religion. All in the name of oppression to those that believe otherwise.

- The compilation of The Bible, may have not been as originally intended. That somehow, selected works were meticulously chosen to represent best what we know now of 'Christianity'. That Jesus Christ of the biblical copy differs greatly of his historical version. That somehow, we were being told of what we need to be told of. That translation were deliberately blurred to conceal true meanings.

- That the link between Judaism and Christianity was/is actually deeper than what we assumed it is. Jesus was not just a Jew. He was a man that had integrated Jewish understanding of faith into his own teachings. That he was somehow deeply affected by the oppression and fate of the Jews at the time. That his Messianic arrival was foretold a long time before Christianity was finely reshaped.

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Being a Christian, a Catholic in fact - I had hoped that this book may had shed a well argued parts of Christianity which I have been most intrigued about. Even when reviewing this book, I tried hard enough to separate my understanding of this religion to further enable me to explore the criticism. To me this book is not speaking of blasphemy. It is nothing more than an insight into 'what if?' that sadly, was not explored convincingly enough. A half-boiled attempt - could I have said it better?

My thoughts exactly. Though a nice try.

An interesting read.

Melissa Bond says

Where to begin with this book? The information is overwhelming, and even though quite a bit of what Baigent reveals is nothing new to scholars and students, he does bring his own experiences to the table backing it with strong undeniable proof. I was a little surprised that Baigent was satisfied to start with the Egyptians of having a Christ figure, as it is documented to have occurred in earlier cults and religions far preceding the Egyptians. Although he does mention some, I do understand he wanted to keep the focus on Christianity and the Christ myth beneath its beginnings.

Baigent is a dramatic writer, but I do have to say for a book such as this, he does get a little emotionally wordy in transitioning between events, but otherwise, he leaves what he is most excited about until the very end, which was bold and brilliant.

I do hope more is discovered, and Baigent reveals answers to the questions he now raises with his findings. I will certainly be looking out for the second part of his journey to uncovering the truth. I can only hope more people take an interest in learning the facts of what they believe and the history of their faith instead of so blindly accepting myth as fact. If one wants to argue what Baigent has clearly provided, he gives references, many from the gospels themselves.

As a Jew who has traveled to Israel and studied religion, even I know the Torah is full of legendary stories, and what is historically claimed to be true should be questioned extensively. I have also read the Bible, and the errors and contradictions are so obvious, and even what authors of the Bible took from the Torah popularly known as fables and fiction to Jews, the Bible claims as fact. As an art history student, artworks Christians so revere are riddled with contradictions to what they believe, purposefully done by the artists who created them having been convinced themselves by undeniable proof, but so many believers just cannot see nor accept the truth of what those artists really are trying to tell them. Baigent is correct, all religions have a spin to justify actions and reactions, and the crime comes in the profit of the ignorance of those so blind to believe without really knowing the factual history of what they place their faith into. Every single religion and non-religious beliefs are largely based on myth, so how one can live their lives, justifying their actions and reactions to life when the platform they stand on has little to no historical value just simply puzzles me. It also frightens me because for every single person each religion completely blindfolds, the more powerful the corrupt become.

Man will always strive to know what is beyond this life, beyond this world we live in, but to follow what others before us claim so blindly not only does not get us closer to learning the truth, but weakens the very foundation of ones faith irregardless of ones beliefs. It is when you cannot question your beliefs that the blindfold tightens. Who is to say which religion is the "right" religion, especially when the corruption is so clearly exposed?
