

ANOTHER LAME ATTEMPT TO DEBUNK JESUS

Since 1996, there has never been a year when the media didn't offer us the same Easter present: the Jesus that Christians believe in is a hoax (see pp. 10-11 for a detailed account). During this period, ABC aired three shows that raised questions about the divinity of Jesus; *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, the Discovery Channel and National Public Radio (NPR) each made two contributions; and PBS aired one. And on April 2, NBC's "Dateline" made its first presentation.

The guest on "Dateline" was Michael Baigent, whose new book, *The Jesus Papers*, has as its subtitle, *Exposing the Greatest Cover-Up in History*. The book debuted in late March, a date the publisher, Harper, said was chosen more than a year ago to coincide with Easter. How thoughtful.

Baigent, who unsuccessfully sued another fraud, Dan Brown of *Da Vinci Code* fame, contends in his latest fable that Jesus wasn't divine (just a handy carpenter) and wasn't born of a virgin birth. Naturally, he married Mary Magdalene and sired a child. This is old hat by now, but what makes this book so special is the revelation that Jesus didn't die on the cross—he simply took off to recuperate. Get it? Now we know why the tomb was empty.

"In other words," we told the press, "those who crucified Jesus were incompetent. And all Jesus needed was a little R&R and he was good to go—to Home Depot or Lowe's—wherever he could continue his trade."

Baigent claims his new book is non-fiction. But he once told us that the 1982 book that he co-authored, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, was non-fiction; he now admits it is "historical

conjecture.” In other words, he lied.

When Baigent was recently asked where he got the proof that Jesus was alive in A.D. 45, he said he got it from reports about a book he cannot find (we’re not making this up!). When asked how he knows the tomb was empty because Jesus needed some R&R, he said, “Unfortunately, in this case, there are no facts.” Put differently, the guy is a crook and “Dateline” has been had.