Can the Gospels be Trusted?

I. Was the character of Jesus invented by the early church?

(1) radical form criticism – Bultmann

(2) Jesus Seminar Bible

(3) *The Da Vinci Code*

II. Why is this important?

(1) Christianity based on history

    (a) C.S. Lewis – If true, of infinite importance

    (b) Paul Johnson

(2) Unless it’s true, we have no guide for life and spirituality.

III. What’s the case against Jesus being invented?
(1) Inventing the character of Jesus would take another Jesus.

(2) Importance of eyewitnesses.

(3) All the Apostles put to death as martyrs.

(4) The time for the creation of the material is too short.

(5) Fails to account for the Jewish perspective on memory.

(a) informal uncontrolled

(b) formal controlled

(c) informal controlled

(6) Utter uniqueness of Jesus' teaching.

(a) Abba

(b) Amen
(7) Unique forms of speech.

(8) Utterly unique use of parables.

CONCLUSION:

In light of these and other arguments, the burden of proof is on those who maintain the inauthenticity rather than on those who maintain the authenticity of Jesus. The Jesus of the Gospels is authentic.

Further Sources:

N.T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus*
N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*
Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict – Vol II*
Gary Habermas, *The Evidence for Jesus*
Timothy Luke Johnson, *The Real Jesus*
F.F. Bruce, *New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*