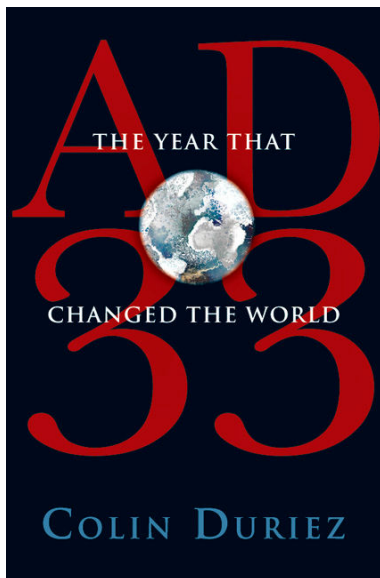




AN INTERVIEW WITH
COLIN DURIEZ
ABOUT *THE YEAR*
THAT CHANGED
THE WORLD



“A.D. 33 was a remarkable year by all accounts, dominated, so far as the hindsight of world history is concerned, by two people, a Roman and a Jew.”

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Why is it helpful to specifically analyze the state of the world and the Roman Empire in A.D. 33?

Colin Duriez—The evidence points to the death of Christ being in A.D. 33. The Gospel accounts should be looked at as historical documents of the time. When they are considered with other histories and documents from the first and second centuries, and archaeological discoveries, an integrated picture emerges of the world then. The various sources, taken together, give a three-dimensional insight into events in which ordinary people, as well as the great and powerful, were caught up. There is value in focusing upon a particular year: so much has happened in the past that this gives a frame which helps us comprehend a point of time in the past, helping us not to be overwhelmed by the complexity of history. As it happens, we know a lot about that particular year throughout the world, and even what happened on a number of actual days. We get a very detailed picture of what was happening in the Roman Empire, and what was going on in the months before Jesus’ death, his last days, his resurrection appearances around Jerusalem and Galilee, and in the early days and months of the church soon after. We get some idea of what was happening in other places, such as Britain, India, China, and Central and South America, all of which would sooner or later be impacted by Christianity.

You specifically look at two key figures from A.D. 33—Tiberius and Jesus. Why did you decide to parallel the lives of these two figures?

Colin—As I explored the lives of the two people who had the most historic significance in that year, in terms of world history, striking contrasts and parallels emerged. Preeminently, both had kingdoms, one of this world, and one a heavenly kingdom. One was the most powerful man in the world, in terms of military and political power. The other claimed a kingdom that worked by other, spiritual principles, grounded in love, and which was ultimately stronger. His followers were to take over the Roman Empire within centuries without force.

CONTINUED . . .
AN INTERVIEW

WITH

**COLIN
DURIEZ**



A professional writer, **Colin Duriez** currently offers acquisitions, editorial and project management services through his own business, InWriting, based in Keswick, Cumbria. He studied at the University of Ulster, and under Francis Schaeffer at L'Abri in Huemoz, Switzerland. His best-known books include *The C. S. Lewis Encyclopedia* (Crossway/SPCK), *The Inklings Handbook* (with the late David Porter, Chalice), *A Field Guide to Narnia* (InterVarsity Press) and others.

What did you hope to accomplish through the writing of *AD 33*?

Colin—My hope was that by taking a fresh look at that year I could build up a consistent and tangible picture of what was happening throughout the world then, and the particular and everyday conditions that led to the birth of the Christian movement, which continues to have an enormous impact around the globe. It is the big story, beyond the journalist's wildest dreams, and I've tried to narrate it. People make history, so I've tried to bring alive key players in that year: Tiberius, Jesus, Mary of Bethany, Peter, Pilate, Agrippina the Elder, Guangwudi (Lin-Xiu) and many others.

Describe your own personal experience in exploring the year A.D. 33.

Colin—My most important experience in writing *AD 33* was my exposure to histories and other documents of the first and second centuries, as well as to archaeological findings throughout the world. It is a salutary experience to be taken into an epoch which had very different assumptions about the world and human beings than the modern West, and yet to have confirmed that the modern world would not exist without the events which took place then. The events of A.D. 33 are our history, whether or not we happen to have faith in one of the most important persons, and in my view the most important person, alive and active in that year. It is not so surprising that Jesus, a Jew, is admired throughout the twenty-first-century world by many secularists and Muslims, Jews and Buddhists, New Agers, and, of course, Christians. Perhaps my most important discovery was the varied nature of Judaism before the fall of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70, and the fascinating work being done by historians and other scholars into that early Judaism. Jesus after all was a Jew, and it is essential to understand his context and why his teaching and death were both part of Judaism and world-changingly radical in relation to it. I feel I know him better now than I did before writing the book.