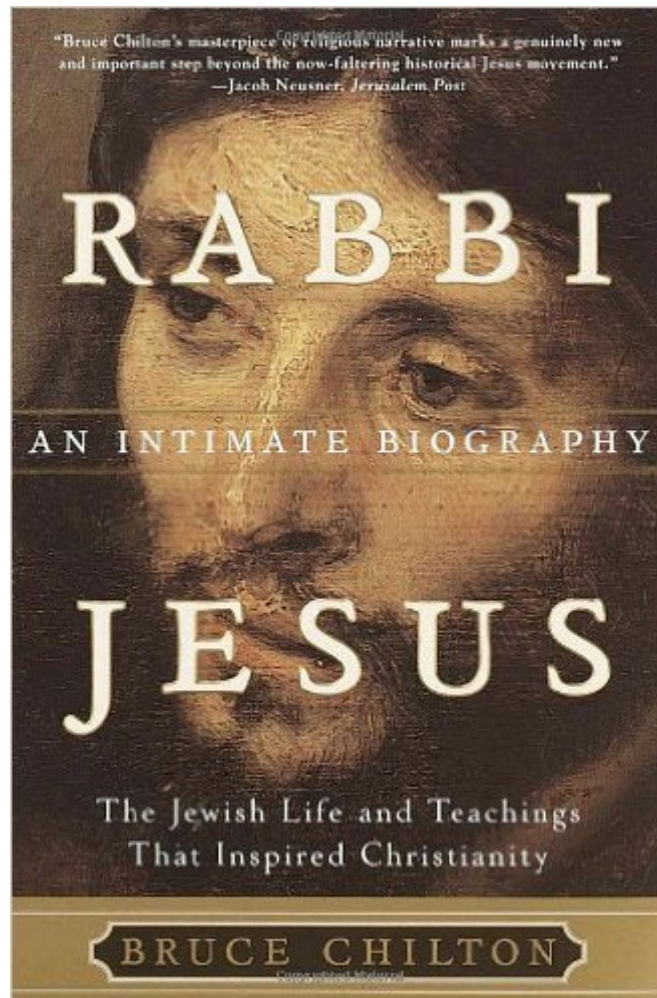


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Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography



Synopsis

Beginning with the Gospels, interpretations of the life of Jesus have flourished for nearly two millennia, yet a clear and coherent picture of Jesus as a man has remained elusive. In *Rabbi Jesus*, the noted biblical scholar Bruce Chilton places Jesus within the context of his times to present a fresh, historically accurate, and revolutionary examination of the man who founded Christianity. Drawing on recent archaeological findings and new translations and interpretations of ancient texts, Chilton discusses in enlightening detail the philosophical and psychological foundations of Jesus's ideas and beliefs. His in-depth investigation also provides evidence that contradicts long-held beliefs about Jesus and the movement he led. Chilton shows, for example, that the High Priest Caiaphas, as well as Pontius Pilate, played a central role in Jesus's execution. It is, however, Chilton's description of Jesus's role as a rabbi, or "master," of Jewish oral traditions, as a teacher of the Cabala, and as a practitioner of a Galilean form of Judaism that emphasized direct communication with God that casts an entirely new light on the origins of Christianity. Seamlessly merging history and biography, this penetrating, highly readable book uncovers truths lost to the passage of time and reveals a new Jesus for the new millennium.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I purchased this book because, as a person from an indigenous group of the Middle East/North Africa region who has studied at an institutional level the three Abrahamic-desert religions, I was interested in learning more about the Jewish culture and traditions of Yesua'/Yeshua/Jesus. I

expected and hoped to read an account that placed Jesus and his Jewish followers, friends, and family in their original Middle Eastern cultural context. However, in Bruce Chilton's Rabbi Jesus, I got far more than I bargained for. Here is a breakdown of Chilton's goals and methods: Chilton is not only, like me, interested in highlighting Jesus' indigenous Jewish culture, but in challenging the veracity and alleged biases of the four canonic Gospels and their writers--indeed, in redefining Jesus' ministry and theology in a manner that refutes "traditional" (his word) Christian teachings. His sources include non-canonical early Christian writings and the written and oral Rabbinic literature (Mishnah, Talmud, and Targumim) of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D./C.E. Note that Chilton's "creative" (publisher's word) depiction of Jesus and his teachings contradicts the basic tenets (as expressed in the Nicene Creed) of all major Christian denominations, whether Orthodox (both Eastern and Oriental), Catholic (both Roman and Eastern rite), or Protestant (both "mainstream" and Evangelical). For example, Chilton categorically rejects Jesus' virgin birth, divinity, and (literal, that is, corporeal) resurrection. It is not so much the contradiction itself that I find at fault; I'm always ready to debunk a long-held supposition or two. And, in fact, Chilton does succeed in fully orienting Jesus in an indigenous Jewish culture, hence the two stars.

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