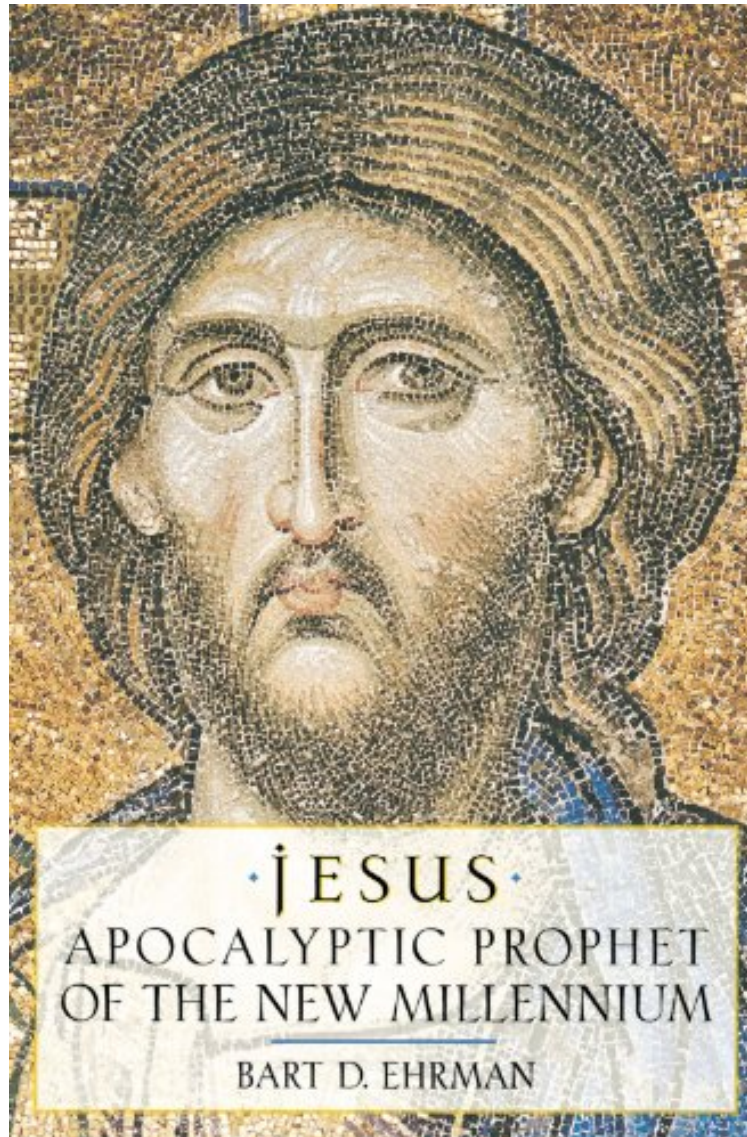


## Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium

*Bart D. Ehrman*

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**Bart D. Ehrman : Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. This is not the end of your faith...By This is not the end of your faith... at least not necessarily. In two key books, Apocalyptic Prophet (about the historic Jesus) and Misquoting Jesus (about the New Testament), Dr. Ehrman searches the most reliably accurate parts of the gospels to better understand who Jesus was. From this effort, Ehrman makes an exceedingly strong case that Jesus was a human product of his

time, not of All Time. This is hard reading for Christians because Ehrman, formerly a Christian, methodically examines other historical sources along with the oldest surviving materials of the New Testament to make informed, rational, evidence-based arguments consistent with proven principles of scholarship. He's not pulling this stuff out of the air (in fact, much of it has been long-proved but ignored), and he's well aware of the crisis this awareness can cause. But evidence in the text and subtext of Jesus' message shows that his life was altogether human, while his story made a compelling impression in retelling that took on a life of its own. His followers couldn't let it go. Many of us still can't. Ehrman's point is, however, that the actual Yeshua from Nazareth was simply not the character that emerged through First Century fan fiction. The legendary "Jesus" stands the test of time because, for good and for ill, the canonical gospels allow believers from different times, cultures and contexts to emphasize those parts of the official story that they most crave. And even with all the tampering the story soon received as a result, the actual, mortal Yeshua from Nazareth did give us a lot to work with over the subsequent twenty centuries. The world was sorely ready for the man's radical ethical message -- contagious because he'd mixed it with the equally radical license of apocalyptic urgency. That was a powerful combination, but flawed. The actual Yeshua believed that the world, a mistakenly tiny world, was about to end in a spectacle of doom and magic. It turned out that history wasn't over. He was in fact writing history, in ways he himself never imagined. So the personal question Christians are left with after considering Ehrman's work is: What do we do with God, without Jesus as God? For some, faith dies without religion. Ehrman went from being an evangelical fundamentalist "Bible college" Christian to a moderate, literate Christian, and ultimately an agnostic heavily influenced by the New Atheism. He had very good reasons for this, and his journey was painful and real. But the same route isn't for everyone. The truth is, if you're a Christian who has seriously read Ehrman's work then you've already crossed the Rubicon into literate faith. Literal faith is over for you, whether you recognize it or not. You probably don't need a textual historian to convince you that Earth is more than 5700 years old, that theocracy is disastrous, that the Left Behind series is reckless huxterism. You may have already come to the conclusion that God wants you to be rational and intellectually honest, and that loving God -- however less certainly you view God now -- involves doing so with the mind you were given. Sometimes faith dies. But as the Jesus legend demonstrates, sometimes that's also how we experience faith anew. Consider that it's possible that Ehrman's theses have been on your spiritual reading list all along; that it's your time to encounter these facts about the faith, and to be further changed into the thinking spiritual person you're meant to be. If so, welcome again to the Emmaus Road, where God no longer has the face you knew. For what it's worth, you're not traveling alone.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium by Bart Ehrman By richard gunter Here is a great understanding of the message and mission of Jesus as he actually lived it. Ehrman with his extensive scholarship places Jesus in context of his own time. The various Jewish factions, Roman occupation, and the apocalyptic movement of his day, and the social standing of Jesus and his early followers, all elucidate the historical meaning of Jesus' message. He taught that God would imminently intervene in the world and destroy evil and bring in an utopia. All would be judged on keeping God's Law by a Son of Man. In this New World Order the previously downcast and oppressed would be exalted and the lofty oppressors brought down and Jesus and his disciples would be rulers. But Jesus was crucified and the New World Order never arrived. However the experience of the resurrection gave life to the followers and led to an evolving set of beliefs. Jesus' conquering death and his exaltation to heaven as his followers experienced it, led to seeing Jesus' sacrifice as necessary for salvation. But the continued absence of the Apocalyptic Order, necessitated further evolution. Ehrman also elaborates the historical research methodology and let's us know what we can and cannot know historically. This is a great work to help understand the origin of the Christian perspective in which many of us have found ourselves today.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic By Tim K Ehrman's book is fantastic. He's a very clear writer, drawing the reader in. His style is very conversational, non-academic (i.e., not dry), and you actually want to know what happens next. As a historian, Ehrman is called upon to reconstruct what we can actually know about the historical Jesus and his teachings. As such, Ehrman uses the earliest sources to tell the reader about Jesus and what he did. He dissects which aspects of the Gospel we can fairly conclude as historically accurate. Ehrman utilizes three tools along the way: (1) Multiple attestations [i.e., are the sayings attested to in many of the earliest sources (or, those sources least likely to be effected by future Christianization?)], (2) Dissimilarity (do the sayings/deeds go against some Christian teaching or at least not further a Christian agenda?), and (3) does it make sense in a historical context (given what we know about the first century, does what is said to have happened make sense?). Ehrman makes the case that it is absolutely essential that we understand Jesus in his context. Too often we hear Christians attempting to make sense of Jesus in modern terms. That just can't be sustained, because as a historian, Ehrman wants to know what Jesus actually did and said. Although many Christians won't like what Ehrman has to say, his conclusion is substantially backed up by the evidence we have: Jesus was a Jewish apocalyptic preacher. Jesus taught that the world was going to end in the lifetime of his followers and people better heed his warning. Anyone interested in Jesus from a purely historical (and not theological) perspective could not start at a better place.

In this highly accessible discussion, Bart Ehrman examines the most recent textual and archaeological sources for the

life of Jesus, along with the history of first-century Palestine, drawing a fascinating portrait of the man and his teachings. Ehrman shows us what historians have long known about the Gospels and the man who stands behind them. Through a careful evaluation of the New Testament (and other surviving sources, including the more recently discovered Gospels of Thomas and Peter), Ehrman proposes that Jesus can be best understood as an apocalyptic prophet--a man convinced that the world would end dramatically within the lifetime of his apostles and that a new kingdom would be created on earth. According to Ehrman, Jesus' belief in a coming apocalypse and his expectation of an utter reversal in the world's social organization not only underscores the radicalism of his teachings but also sheds light on both the appeal of his message to society's outcasts and the threat he posed to Jerusalem's established leadership.

.com C.S. Lewis once noted that nowhere do the Gospels say, "Jesus laughed." He's probably laughing now, if he's got access to Bart Ehrman's *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*. The title doesn't even hint at the yuks that Ehrman's prose delivers, but from its very first page, Jesus will tickle your funny bone and stimulate your brain. "At last count," Ehrman begins, "there were something like 8 zillion books written about Jesus .... It's not there aren't enough books about Jesus out there. It's that there aren't enough of the right kind of book. Very, very few, in fact. I'd say about one and a half." The right kind of book, according to Ehrman, is one that portrays Jesus roughly as Albert Schweitzer did, as a first-century Jewish apocalypticist: "This is a shorthand way of saying that Jesus fully expected that the history of the world as we know it (well, as he knew it) was going to come to a screeching halt, that God was soon going to intervene in the affairs of this world, overthrow the forces of evil in a cosmic act of judgment, destroy huge masses of humanity, and abolish existing human political and religious institutions. All this would be a prelude to the arrival of a new order on earth, the Kingdom of God." Ehrman's is a historical-Jesus book, a very smart, humble, and humorous popular summary of Christian and secular evidence of Jesus' life, work, and legacy. He believes that apocalypticism is the true core of Jesus' message, and that comfortable middle-class complacency among scholars, clergy, and laypeople has forged a counterfeit, domesticated, "ethical" Jesus to cover up their befuddlement about his misprediction of the apocalypse. The book will frustrate many readers because it offers no real guidance regarding what one should do with Jesus' apocalypticism. Its project--to prove that Jesus was wrong about the apocalypse--may even appear destructive to some. Yet the argument is convincing enough to induce among careful readers a constructive experience of confusion. Jesus makes readers ask the very question it appears to ignore, in a newly humble way: how, then, should we live? A serious matter, but considering humanity's endless string of wrong answers and infinite capacity for self-delusion, worthy of some good belly laughs, as well. --Michael Joseph Gross  
From Publishers Weekly  
At the end of the millennium, there are as many views of the historical Jesus as there are scholars who writing about him. In his engaging study, Ehrman, associate professor of religious studies at UNC-Chapel Hill, argues that Jesus can be best understood as a "first-century Jewish apocalypticist...who fully expected that the history of the world as he knew it was going to come to a screeching halt and that God was going to overthrow the forces of evil in a cosmic act of judgment." The author contends that this portrait of Jesus, first proclaimed by Albert Schweitzer in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1906), has been overlooked in the rush to draw Jesus in the images of whatever scholarly or popular movement is painting Him. Ehrman examines carefully noncanonical and canonical sources as he reconstructs the life of Jesus. He uses already established critical criteria--independent attestation, dissimilarity, contextual credibility--to determine what elements of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life can be considered authentic. For example, according to the evidence, he asserts that we can seriously doubt that the virgin conception, Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and the story of wise men following a star are historical events. Ehrman then proceeds to provide a lucid overview of the turbulent political and religious times in which Jesus lived and worked. Finally, the author provides a detailed examination of Jesus' words and deeds to show that they present the work of a Jewish apocalyptic prophet who expected universal judgment and the coming Kingdom of God to occur within his own lifetime and that of his disciples. While Ehrman's provocative thesis will stir up controversy among scholars, his warm, inviting prose style and his easy-to-read historical and critical overviews make this the single best introduction to the study of the historical Jesus. (Sept.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.  
From Library Journal  
Ehrman admits that there are "something like eight zillion books written about Jesus." Then why add another book to this mountain of verbiage? Because, according to Ehrman, very few of these books are aimed at a popular audience; most are "inexcusably dull and/or idiosyncratic" and they don't consider the evidence and they scarcely show the view that is held by "the majority" of scholars. Unfortunately, this comes dangerously close to the pot calling the kettle black. Although Ehrman's writing is lively and thorough, he glosses over scholarly debate, making heavy use of phrases like "almost all scholars" and "most historians" and wrongly giving an illusion of certainty and agreement where there is none. He finds very little of historical value in the Gospels, seeing them as theological documents pasted together from a patchwork of sources after decades of oral change. A more balanced look at the scholarly debates can be found in *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?: A Debate Between William Lane Craig and John Dominic Crossman* (LJ 1/99). Those desiring a more intensive introduction to the questions discussed here will find that Raymond Brown's *An Introduction to the New Testament* (LJ 2/15/98) repays the extra effort. Still, this is a well-written exposition of one

side of an important scholarly debate; recommended for public and academic libraries. AEugene O. Bowser, Univ. of Northern Colorado, Greeley Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.