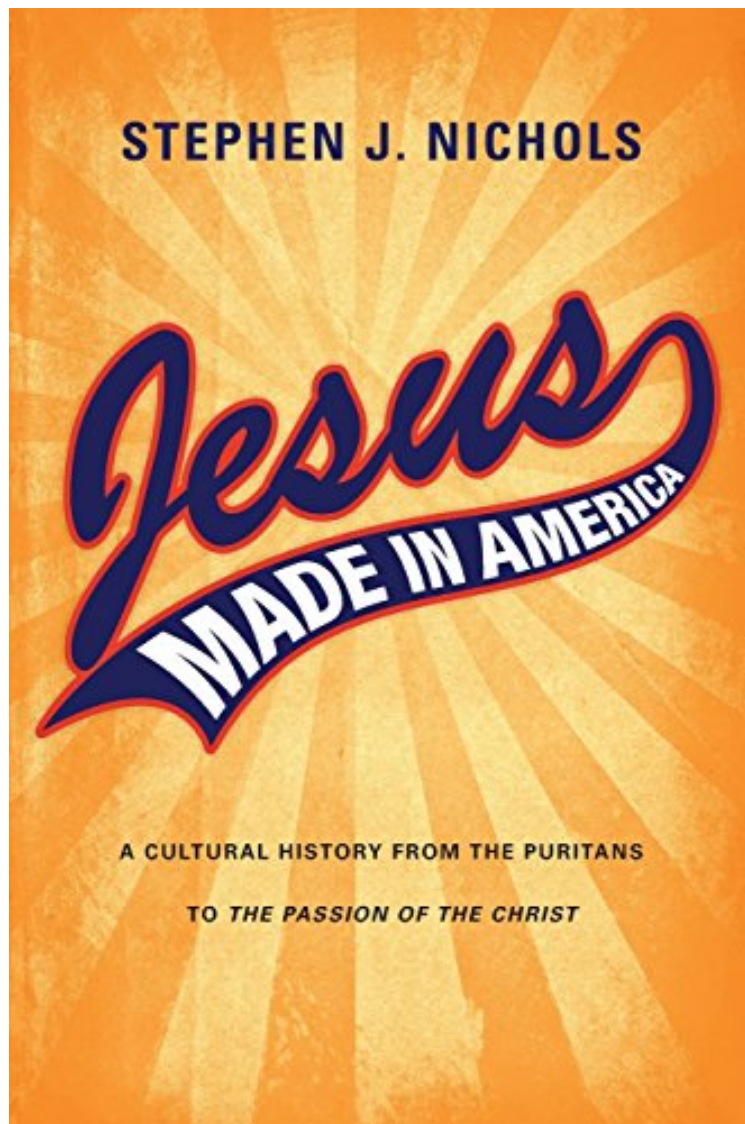


[Download free pdf] Jesus Made in America: A Cultural History from the Puritans to "The Passion of the Christ"

## Jesus Made in America: A Cultural History from the Puritans to "The Passion of the Christ"

*Stephen J. Nichols*

*ebooks | Download PDF | \*ePub | DOC | audiobook*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#866845 in Books 2008-05-04Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .70 x 6.001, .79 #File Name: 0830828494237 pages | File size: 19.Mb

**Stephen J. Nichols : Jesus Made in America: A Cultural History from the Puritans to "The Passion of the Christ"** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jesus Made in America: A Cultural History from the Puritans to "The Passion of the Christ":

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Lord, not a logoBy E. J. BostonStephen Nichols writes with wit,

wisdom, and knowledge. You will find yourself laughing aloud and soon after shaking your head at the truth of his insight. His style is easy to follow. His information is accurate. He relates information in such a way that you can imagine yourself in the era he discusses without ever having been there. But much more importantly, he helps you understand the era... even our own.

**Book thesis:** This book attempts to draw attention to the explicit ways cultural forces have shaped the identity of the American evangelical Jesus. His thesis is thoroughly supported throughout the book--eight chapters each delve into a different era, with only slight overlap between three chapters, but even so the area he addresses is always unique and offers a broad spectrum through which to view the cultural climate. Nichols provides great insight in discerning the cultural impact on Evangelical Christian understanding of the person of Jesus and calls Christians to think deeply on the person of Christ and restore him to his true position: Lord, not logo. He traces history so well that one can follow cultural trends and begin to say, "Oh... so that's where that idea came from!" Like blonde Jesus. Or anti-establishment Jesus. The Puritans, the Founders, the Colonial frontiersmen, the Victorians, the Liberal-Conservative (theologically) era, contemporary Christian music, Jesus in the cinema, WWJD and t-shirts, and politics--Nichols covers all of these in depth, drawing undeniable connections between circumstances that occurred and prevalent mindsets of the day. There is no doubt you will walk away from this book with a firm grasp on how Jesus has been perceived throughout cultures, but more importantly you will begin to see how your culture has been affecting your perception of Jesus and you can start to evaluate what is true to Christ and what you have unwittingly tagged him with. This book will help you understand Christ better.

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Very well done...By Seth McBee I have become a huge fan of Stephen Nichols. He is very good at writing about history without making it terribly boring. I have read three of his books so far and every one of them was very well done. This is one that I didn't really know what to expect but was excited to read it. What Nichols does is spends the first half or so of the book walking the reader through how particular cultures and people in the past have really shaped our thinking and their thinking of Christ. He starts with the Puritans, then to our founding fathers, the Victorians and the modernists of the early 20th century. After Nichols goes through these with precision he then gives the reader insight on how we have specifically been affected, or infected, depends on how you see it, through Contemporary Christian Music, Hollywood, Consumerism and Politics. This part of the book was very informative as Nichols shows how the history of each one of these has led us to where we are currently with Jesus and culture and he doesn't leave any stone unturned. He questions things such as Thomas Kinkade, Precious Moments, The Passion of the Christ, CCM Music Festivals, WWJD bracelets, Christian T-Shirts, Dobson and the extreme politics pulling on Jesus from both sides. I believe that Nichols unpacks some things that are very worrisome in our day in age where Madonna actually has become a prophetess, even though she falls into the same trap: Christianity is becoming more of a currency than a belief. Sadly, I think she is right. This book is extremely well done and I would recommend this to any reader to show what is happening in front of our own eyes and the danger of falling into consumerism Christianity. This might have been Nichols best book to date. Highly Recommended.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A PLIABLE AMERICAN SAVIOR

By AJC Jesus Made in America: A Cultural History from the Puritans to the Passion of the Christ (Paperback) by Stephen J. Nichols is one of many books, as of late, showing how American's view of Jesus is shaped more by their own world view and cultural surroundings, than it is by the Gospels or ancient Church teaching. While it may sound as if Dr. Nichols has stumbled on nothing new here, he does a great job in bringing the reader a concise history of how America's view of Jesus has changed since the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock, or the Spanish settled St. Augustine, Florida for that matter (funny how our history is shaped by an English Protestant point of view, but I digress.) Anyway, reading this book I did not know whether to laugh or cry. I would be lying if I did not say in my walk, I too, have gotten caught up in America's Jesus, but this book did me the service of showing me why. I think most mature Christian's, meaning those educated in the Faith, leave the Jesus of popular behind eventually. But, many Americans who profess a Christian faith practiced find their savior in a Jesus shaped by popular culture and nick nacks they see at their local "Christian" bookstore. Bookstore in itself being a misnomer as these once fine places have emptied the shelves of reading materials for the most part and become commercial enterprises that use Jesus to sell Kitsch. And, this certainly comes through in Dr. Nichol's fine work. The book presents a timeline from the Puritans until the present day of how the image in the minds of Americans has changed throughout our history. This book is a great work on American Church history.

Jesus is as American as baseball and apple pie. But how this came to be is a complex story--one that Stephen Nichols tells with care and ease. Beginning with the Puritans, he leads readers through the various cultural epochs of American history, showing at each stage how American notions of Jesus were shaped by the cultural sensibilities of the times, often with unfortunate results. Always fascinating and often humorous, Jesus Made in America offers a frank assessment of the story of Christianity in America, including the present. For those interested in the cultural implications of that story, this book is a must-read.

From Publishers Weekly After complimenting the Puritans for a vibrant spirituality grounded in sound biblical and church theology, Lancaster Bible College professor Nichols shows how subsequent generations of Americans have

reduced Jesus to whatever best fits their needs. The book demonstrates in humorous detail how Jesus has proved to be a malleable figure in American culture and politics, from Jefferson's moral-exemplar Jesus to the manly Jesus of Billy Sunday, or from a trivialized Precious Moments Jesus to Focus on the Family's Republican Jesus. Nichols contends that reducing Jesus in this way is harmful. Although the book spotlights the Jesus of American evangelicalism, its chapters on contemporary images of and ideas about Jesus are filled with references that any modern American reader will recognize. For nonevangelical Americans, bemused by the proliferation of Jesus paraphernalia among believers, such discussion offers welcome perspective. Nichols's critique may not persuade his fellow evangelicals to tune out the ubiquitous Jesus is my boyfriend songs or turn off Veggie Tales. But his call to humbly accept that Jesus is more complex than a slogan or plaything strikes a chord. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Nichols's critique will provoke thought and lively discussion on issues that today's Christians need to consider." (James Gorman, *Restoration Quarterly*, 53:2, 2011)"Jesus Made in America is written in a lively style, one from which the author's voice clearly and uniquely rings. His case is compelling and his argument is one that needs to receive a wide reading in evangelical churches. May Nichols' work cause evangelicals to rediscover the robust Jesus of the Holy Scripture." (Jeff Robinson, *Towers*, August 16, 2010)I found Nichols' book stimulating, challenging and troubling. The stimulation comes from the writing of a competent scholar who examines the current literature and cultural commentaries. I found it challenging because I too am a part of the consumerism that grips our culture and our churches. The troublesome part of Nichols' book is that it is much too close to home. Nichols' book may make us examine our cultural and spiritual experiences and relate them to our motives and contributions to linguistics and Bible translation. (Karl J. Franklin, *Christian Scholar's*, Winter 2009)Nichols has useful things to say about the evangelical use of media, especially music and film, and about the commercialization and politicization of Jesus in our own time by evangelical Christians. (Howard Miller, *The Journal of American History*, June 2009)Nichols takes the reader on a history of America through the person of Jesus. How have we formulated Him to fit our collective conscience? Nichols advises: listen to scripture first, listen to tradition, and listen to experience. (JD, *Libraries Alive*, Winter 2009)I certainly recommend Nichol's book to those evangelicals who wish to be capable of critically evaluating their culture, who are open to the painful experience of realizing that not everything you have assumed even as part of your Christian worldview deserves the label "Christian." For all those interested in American Christian culture, but in particular for those who participate in it, Nichol's book provides a helpful perspective and much valuable insight. (James F. McGrath, *Exploring our Matrix* ([exploringourmatrix.blogspot.com](http://exploringourmatrix.blogspot.com)), August 14, 2008)One of the most engaging, informative books I've read this year. (Tim Challies, *Discerning Reader*, July 15, 2008). . .one of the most engaging, informative books I've read in a long time. Nichols helps us learn from the mistakes of those in the past, while offering words of wisdom for those of us seeking to be faithful to Jesus in the present. (Rev. John Chadick, *Book Bargains and Previews*, July 2008)In Matthew 16:13-20, Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Historian Stephen J. Nichols surveys the answers of American evangelicals particularly. What he finds makes for disturbing reading. (George Wood, *AG ThinkTank*, June 2008)One of the most engaging, informative books I've read this year. In fact, I'll be surprised if this book doesn't make my annual Top Ten list of "favorite reads." (Trevin Wax, *Kingdom People*, June 18, 2008)"I would highly recommend the book, which can teach us a great deal about American culture and how we view Christ. It really is worth picking up a copy." (Justin Taylor on *Between Two Worlds* ([theologica.blogspot.com](http://theologica.blogspot.com)), April 23, 2008)"I hate to say it, but Nichols is right: 'Too often American evangelicals have settled for a Christology that can be reduced to a bumper sticker.' My hope and prayer for this book is that our leading preachers will read it, learn from Nichols about the profound Christian heritage of reflection on the natures and person of Christ, and work to edify their audiences with meaty biblical preaching about this most important doctrine. I am more optimistic than Nichols about the potential of recent cultural trends to fortify such efforts--especially the recent emphasis on Jesus' concern for the poor. But I applaud Nichols's attempt to take us beyond our own little worlds and help us learn from other people, past and present, about the excellency of Christ." (Doug Sweeney, associate professor of church history and director of the Carl F. H. Henry Center for Theological Understanding, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)"Stephen J. Nichols loves Jesus and he loves America, but he does not love the way that many Americans have repackaged Jesus to conform to their own cultural assumptions. With the learning of a first-rate historian, the spiritual bearings of an orthodox theologian and the passion of a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, Nichols charts his way through the American religious experience from the Puritans to the present. Evangelicals who assume that distorted and undeveloped Christologies are just a problem among theological liberals particularly need to read this book. The real Jesus might have us attend first to a beam in our own eye." (Timothy Larsen, *McManis Professor of Christian Thought*, Wheaton College)"Could it be that in their 'personal relationship with Jesus' evangelicals in the United States have gotten the better end of the deal? This is certainly one question that readers can plausibly take away from Stephen Nichols's imaginative and knowledgeable study of evangelical conceptions of Jesus. As he shows, 'having Jesus in my heart' often means reducing the eternal Son of God to the proportions of believers' limited imaginations more than it does being conformed to the image of God revealed in Christ. As somber and difficult as that lesson may be to receive, Nichols packages it in a lively narrative that is sure to entertain even while hitting the reader right between the eyes." (D. G. Hart, *Intercollegiate Studies Institute*, and author

of *That Old-Time Religion in Modern America: Evangelical Protestants in the Twentieth Century*) "This is a fascinating historical chronicle of the many different ways we have attempted to 'Americanize' Jesus. But reading it is also an important spiritual exercise. Stephen Nichols points us beyond the distorted images of Jesus that so easily tempt us to the reality of a Savior who is the Lord of the nations." (Richard J. Mouw, President and Professor of Christian Philosophy, Fuller Theological Seminary) "Stephen Nichols's account of how Jesus has been perceived throughout American history is long on wisdom and short on tedium. His lively account is especially noteworthy as it explains what the nation's first presidents made of Jesus and how he has been depicted by some of its most popular movie producers. Not the least of the book's many merits is Nichols's ability to sort through the extraordinary mix of cultural nonsense and profound theological insight that make up this story." (Mark Noll, Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History, University of Notre Dame) About the Author Stephen J. Nichols (Ph.D., Westminster Theological Seminary) is professor of theology and church history at Lancaster Bible College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He is the coeditor of *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition* and the author of many books, including *The Reformation: How a Monk and a Mallet Changed the World* and *For Us and for Our Salvation: The Doctrine of Christ in the Early Church*. He chairs the American Christianity section of the Evangelical Theological Society.