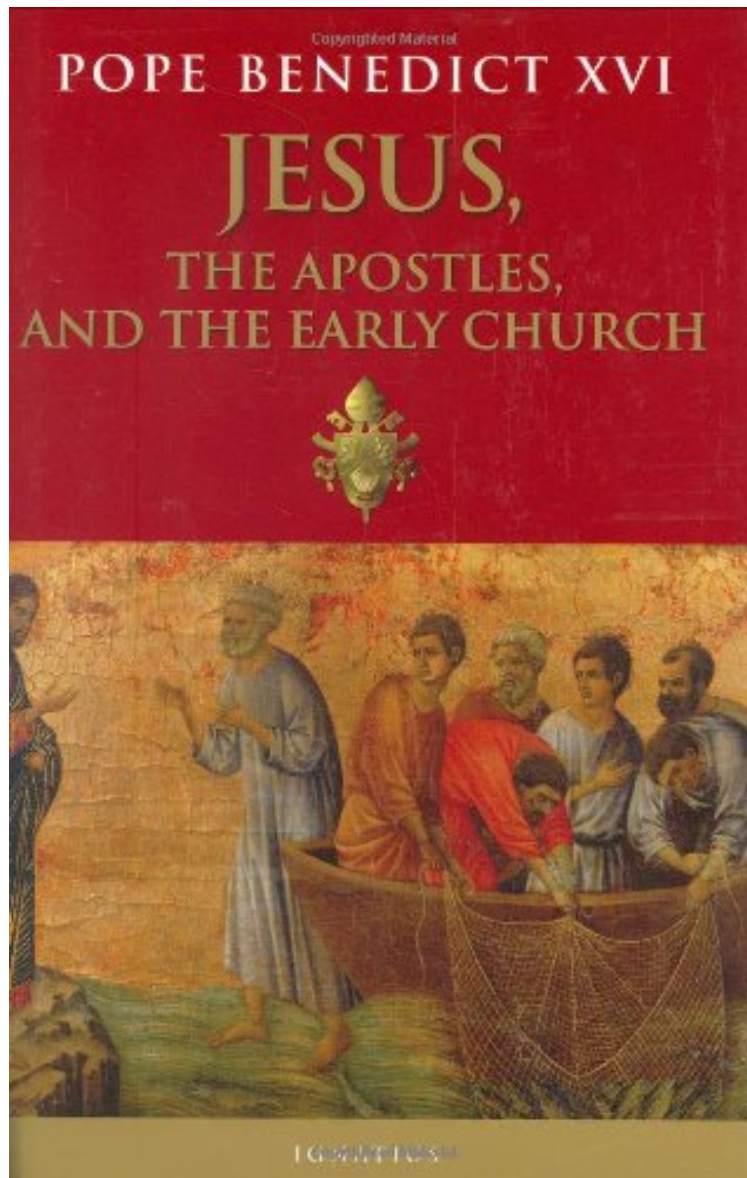


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## Jesus, the Apostles and the Early Church

*Pope Benedict XVI*

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**Pope Benedict XVI : Jesus, the Apostles and the Early Church** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jesus, the Apostles and the Early Church:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Pope Benedict comes through with another great series on the early church By Chris Pope Benedict delivers the insight needed for Catholics to make their way in this modern world by going back in time and showing how issues today are much like the issues our church fathers had to deal with back

then.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. an inspirational book on the apostles of Jesus and the church  
By Donner C. S. Tan  
Tradition is not the transmission of things or words, a collection of dead things. Tradition is the living river that links us to the origins, the living river in which the origins are ever present, the great river that leads us to the gates of eternity.'(pg.28) says Pope Benedict XVI. With this reflection on what it means for the Church to be 'built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets' (Eph 2:20), Benedict presents to us a series of catechetical instructions on the apostles of the church collectively and individually, delivered to general audiences between 15 Mar 2006 and 14 Feb 2007. I appreciate the succinct way he explains the notion of what constitutes apostolic authority and how the church is constituted by the apostolic witness as it is and continues to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. As such, the 'gift to be safeguarded' is also a gift that continues to lead the church to a fuller realization of the gospel truth and our communion in Christ. Benedict also takes us through the individual apostles, including Paul ('the one untimely born') and their associates (eg. Timothy and Titus), bringing out the specific colours of each character as he meditates on the cameo appearances/utterances of these in the gospel accounts. Take for example, Peter. These words strike me as particularly poignant: "And it seems to me that these conversions of Saint Peter on different occasions, and his whole figure, are a great consolation and a great lesson for us. We too have a great desire for God; we too want to be generous, but we too expect God to be strong in the world and to transform the world on the spot, according to our ideas and the needs we perceive. God chooses a different way. God chooses the way of transformation of hearts in suffering and in humility. And we, like Peter, must convert over and over again. We must follow Jesus and not go before him: it is he who shows us the way." And about Thomas, he writes: "At first, he did not believe that Jesus had appeared in his absence and said, 'Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.' Basically, from these words emerges the conviction that Jesus can now be recognized by his wounds than by his face. Thomas holds that the signs that confirm Jesus' identity are now above all his wounds, in which he reveals to us how much he loved us. In this the Apostle is not mistaken." I find my heart deeply moved by comments like these because in a simple but profound way, he unravels the truths of the gospel contained in the personal encounters that these ordinary men and women had of the living Christ. You will find many such gems scattered throughout the simple prose with which he relates the stories of the apostles to the modern audience. The stories are not stuffed with information but brief and to the point. In a way, it is like hearing the gospel once again through the personal portraits of these early, foundational witnesses of Christ. 45 of 46 people found the following review helpful. Meditative Talks  
By Billyjack D'Urberville  
For persons who want to encounter Benedict 16 in an accessible vein, this might be a good place to start. These are more or less straight transcriptions of a series of his Wednesday public talks in the big Paul 6 Auditorium at the Vatican. There has been no effort to enhance them or make them more literary. Even a few awkward phrases are preserved -- or perhaps poorly translated -- although this oddly contributes to an air of spontaneous freshness. The talks were not aimed at giving an in depth look at what is known about the 12 apostles and the other 1st generation disciples treated. The purpose was to pick out an aspect or two of each figure from scripture, and develop it into a short meditation on aspects of Christian life in particular, and the infant Church in general. While the pope thus aims to stay relatively light and aim for a broad audience, the depth of his penetration -- largely derived from a lifetime of vast reading and study -- is nonetheless evident. This pope is an academic and he simply can't hide it, and the reader is occasionally hit over the head by the scope and breadth of his background in this regard. It is obvious he has simply read everything. This comes across more not in what he says, but in what he chooses not to say. Benedict also basically hones pretty close to scripture in defining the nugget for each of these meditations. He delves very little into reports on the original 12 by the post-apostolic Church fathers, or much extra-testamental early Christian literature. While obviously not intimidated by modern theology of an historicist bent, he nevertheless stays clear of any controversies with that school. The overall effect is of having particularly Catholic points, theologically speaking, being made in the style of high modern Protestantism, such as the homilies of John Henry Newman as Oxford don before his conversion. In his written work, Benedict only goes farther down that road, such as in the recently published Jesus of Nazareth wherein a whole familiarity with modern theology and its critiques is pre-supposed. I thus hope that transcriptions of talks like these continue to be published, for the paradox of Benedict is that while there is a plethora of books by him out there, most necessitate a degree of specialized study in the post-high school academic sense. He always requires a careful and very very attentive translation -- as unfortunately his most famous talk, in Regensburg about Islam, did not receive from hurried media outlets. He is fascinating to hear, and cozy despite his learning, giving the reader or hearer a privileged feeling like studying under a master teacher. I have the gut sense -- however generally pleasant in tone -- that these transcriptions could have used another sandblast of polish from the translator. I have heard the 81 year old pope speak in person, and have heard good translations on EWTN of some sermons, and the man is simply transfixing and you know he never misses a beat. He is about as consciously subtle as they come for a modern. These deceptively "lite" chats still pack enough wallup that I really don't think the final dimension in nuance was lacking from Benedict. I am happy that Ignatius is getting his stuff out, and doing it timely, and its hard to criticize them. Readers simply need to be aware that world class communicators demand world class translators, and that the latter are always a very scarce commodity. Thus 4 stars for what were likely 5 star performances.

Based on Pope Benedict XVI's weekly teaching on the relationship between Christ and the Church, this book tells the drama of Jesus' first disciples -- his Apostles and their associates -- and how they spread Jesus' message throughout the ancient world. Far from distorting the truth about Jesus of Nazareth, insists Pope Benedict, the early disciples remained faithful to it, even at the cost of their lives. Beginning with the Twelve as the foundation of Jesus' re-establishment of the Holy People of God, Pope Benedict examines the story of the early followers of Christ. He draws on Scripture and early tradition to consider such important figures as Peter, Andrew, James and John, and even Judas Iscariot. Benedict moves beyond the original Twelve to discuss Paul of Tarsus, the persecutor of Christianity who became one of Jesus' greatest disciples. Also considered are Stephen, the first Christian martyr, Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, the wife and husband "team" of Priscilla and Aquila, and such key women figures as Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Phoebe. Jesus, the Apostles and the Early Church is a fascinating journey back to the origins of Christianity. It reveals how Jesus' earliest disciples faithfully conveyed the truth about the "Jesus of history" and how they laid the foundations for the Church, through whom people today can know the same Jesus.

About the Author Pope Benedict XVI (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) is widely recognized as one of the most brilliant theologians and spiritual leaders of our age. As Pope he authored the best-selling *Jesus of Nazareth*; and prior to his pontificate, he wrote many influential books that continue to remain important for the contemporary Church, such as *Introduction to Christianity* and *The Spirit of the Liturgy*.