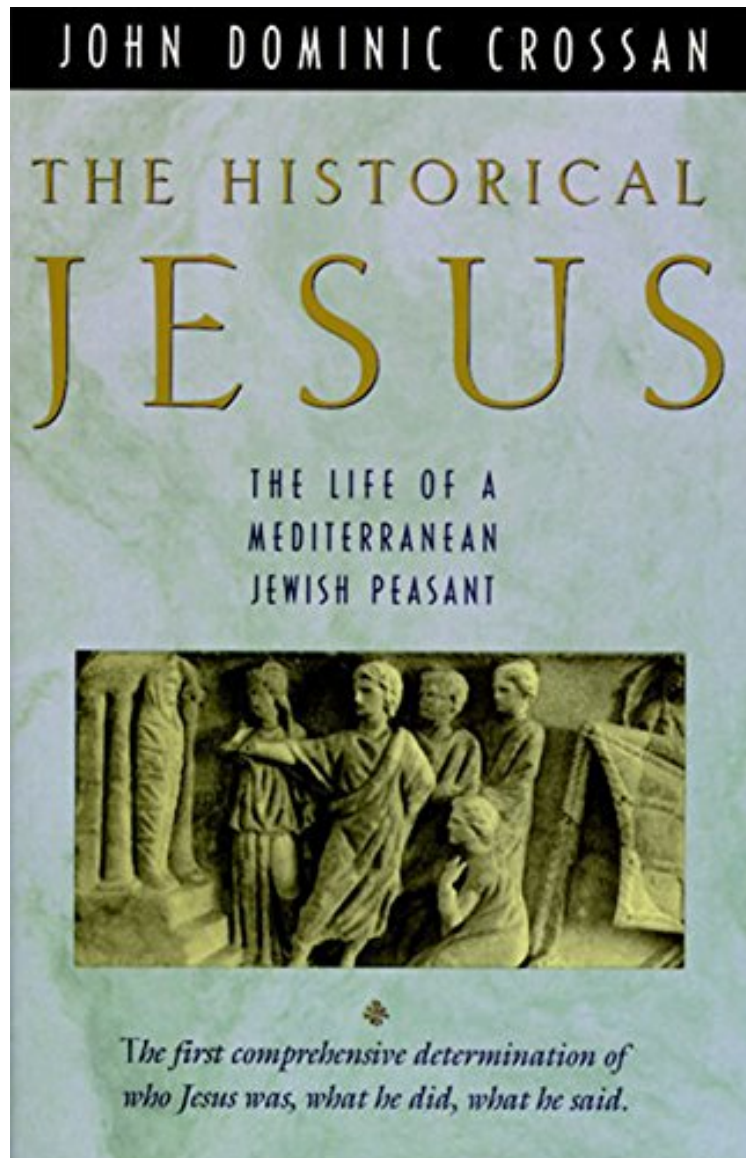


[Library ebook] The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant

The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant

John Dominic Crossan

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#208758 in Books Crossan, John Dominic 1993-02-26 1993-02-26 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x 1.36 x 6.13l, 1.28 #File Name: 0060616296544 pages | File size: 44.Mb

John Dominic Crossan : The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Wanted More JesusBy William J. FallonThe first 60% of this book describes the culture and history of the Galilee both before, during and after (up to at least the first Jewish revolt) the

birth of Jesus, with almost literally no mention OF Jesus. Interesting, if that's what you want, but I bought a book called *The Historical Jesus* so I guess I expected more about him. The last 40% examines various sayings and concepts relative to Jesus and his teachings, and dissects and compares source materials in a complete and scholarly manner. An example would be "Blessed are the poor ...". The author then spends pages examining exactly what was meant by the poor: farmers, artisans, beggars, etc. (Beggars is the answer). I have to say what is done is well done and folks may find it interesting. But I wanted something more narrative and more about Jesus.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Into *The Desert* By Tod Stites In my system of book reviewing, five star ratings are rarely given, so that John Dominic Crossan's three stars is relatively high praise for his "Historical Jesus", and for an intrepid scholar who never fails to entertain. Crossan's reconstruction is both plausible and imaginative, serving to whet the reader's appetite for more historical Jesus study and leaving the impression that with this book, one has glimpsed only a very small tip of a much larger iceberg. Perhaps most fascinating are the indices at the back of the book, where units of Jesus tradition are tabulated according to their chronological layer of origin and the number of sources which testify to each unit during the earliest period of Christian history. This is one of those books that requires persevering amidst proposals with which one does not agree, but there are so many interesting ideas here that I found it well worth the effort. One of the hypotheses I am not sure about involves the interpretation of the units which Crossan calls "Into The Desert"/"Greater Than John" (Matt 11:7-11):(Luke 7:24-28), which are found together in both Matthew and Luke, and, so far as we can tell, in the Sayings Source Q before them. Crossan however pulls them apart, using one part (Matt 11:7-9): (Luke 7:24-26) to support his view of Jesus having supported the message of John the Baptist, and the other part (Matt 11:10):(Luke 7:27) to posit that Jesus at some point changed his mind and no longer considered John's message adequate (see pp.230-8). Evidently Crossan's main criterion for separating this ostensibly compact unit is the fact that the sayings are in fact separated in the apocryphal Gospel Of Thomas, whose independence from the Synoptic Gospels is far from certain (see Fitzmyer, "Essays On The Semitic Background Of The New Testament", p.360-1): (Meier, "A Marginal Jew" vol.1, p.127). In any case, the evidence of Mark gives us two units of tradition which call into question whether Jesus really changed his mind about the message of John. One unit of tradition says that, just before Jesus left Galilee, people there believed he was actually the now dead John come-back-to-life (8:28), and in the other Jesus, toward the end of his ministry, uses John's popularity with the masses as a shield against his opponents (11:27-33). Crossan according to his informational glossary considers neither of these pericopae as stemming from the historical Jesus, because "the discipline" of his book "is to work primarily with plurally attested complexes from the primary stratum of the Jesus tradition" (pp.409,439,445). This methodology I consider to be the strength of Crossan's work, and makes for some fascinating reading. However, the criterion of embarrassment has been promoted as a means of assessing authenticity (Meier, "A Marginal Jew", vol.1, p.168-9), since the post-Easter church would not have fabricated sayings and stories that would have been embarrassing to the Christian creed, and indeed the overall trajectory of the Gospels is clearly to diminish the importance of the Baptist and to magnify the importance of Jesus, as noted by several scholars (Webb, "John The Baptizer And Prophet", p.50-1,55): (Gundry, "Mark", vol.1, p.59-60): (Witherington, "The Christology Of Jesus", p.198-9): (Funk, Hoover; et.al., "The Five Gospels", p.4). So why would the church have fabricated traditions that have the public believe Jesus is only John "redivivus" (come-back-to-life), or have Jesus need to defer to John's (divine) authority in order to maintain his public support? I for one am not convinced that the early church would do so, or that the aforesaid traditions are completely unhistorical, so that it is inherently less likely (or perhaps unlikely) that Jesus ever gave up belief in the Baptizer's proclamation. And what exactly was that proclamation anyway? Was it really so very different from what Jesus preached? To be sure, the Sayings Source Q depicts John as a "doom" prophet who threatens at least some of his contemporaries with "the wrath to come" (Matt 3:7):(Luke 3:7), but despite the fact that most Old Testament prophets preached judgment, some of them preached deliverance (Hanson and Horsley, "Bandits, Prophets, Messiahs", p.172-3). Indeed it seems that the responsible aspect of the prophetic office included not just warning against ineluctable judgment, but in admonishing, so that judgment may be averted (Rengstorff in *Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament*, vol.6, p.811). And so John is cast as "Elijah" (Mark 9:13), whom the pre-Christian sages foretold would come and allay God's wrath before it strikes the earth (Sirach 48:10), and whom the Hebrew prophets said would accomplish reconciliation, so that God would "not come and strike the land with a curse" (Mal 4:5-6). Thus the "voice in the wilderness" (Isa 40:3), John the Baptist (Matt 3:3), is a herald of good tidings (Isa 40:9):(Luke 3:18):(16:16), announcing the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 3:2), "to give knowledge of the salvation of his people, by the forgiveness of their sins" (Luke 1:77).

Render Unto Caesar: Jesus And The Secular Authority Of His Day 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. a tough but rewarding read By Tom NorCal This book is a challenging read. Crossan is somewhat of a renaissance man who incorporates a multitude of academic disciplines and theories into his research, so the reader gets introduced to a variety of types of information that often requires additional explanations and background. So there are many relevant digressions. His writing style is also formal and academic; lots of long sentences, quotes, and a dry delivery, and in following the academic style he explains in detail how he comes to his conclusions (his methodology) and what he thinks about the conclusions of others. Getting past the academic presentation is the challenge. The positives though far outweigh the negatives: This is a compelling cache of information concerning the emperical (non-supernatural) life

of Jesus and the lifestyle of Palestinian Jewish peasants of the 1st century.

"He comes as yet unknown into a hamlet of Lower Galilee. He is watched by the cold, hard eyes of peasants living long enough at a subsistence level to know exactly where the line is drawn between poverty and destitution. He looks like a beggar yet his eyes lack the proper cringe, his voice the proper whine, his walk the proper shuffle. He speaks about the rule of God and they listen as much from curiosity as anything else. They know all about rule and power, about kingdom and empire, but they know it in terms of tax and debt, malnutrition and sickness, agrarian oppression and demonic possession. What, they really want to know, can this kingdom of God do for a lame child, a blind parent, a demented soul screaming its tortured isolation among the graves that mark the edges of the village?" from "The Gospel of Jesus," overture to *The Historical Jesus* The Historical Jesus reveals the true Jesus who he was, what he did, what he said. It opens with "The Gospel of Jesus," Crossan's studied determination of Jesus' actual words and actions stripped of any subsequent additions and placed in a capsule account of his life story. The Jesus who emerges is a savvy and courageous Jewish Mediterranean peasant, a radical social revolutionary, with a rhapsodic vision of economic, political, and religious egalitarianism and a social program for creating it. The conventional wisdom of critical historical scholarship has long held that too little is known about the historical Jesus to say definitively much more than that he lived and had a tremendous impact on his followers. "There were always historians who said it could not be done because of historical problems," writes Crossan. "There were always theologians who said it should not be done because of theological objections. And there were always scholars who said the former when they meant the latter.' With this groundbreaking work, John Dominic Crossan emphatically sweeps these notions aside. He demonstrates that Jesus is actually one of the best documented figures in ancient history; the challenge is the complexity of the sources. The vivid portrayal of Jesus that emerges from Crossan's unique methodology combines the complementary disciplines of social anthropology, GrecoRoman history, and the literary analysis of specific pronouncements, anecdotes, confessions and interpretations involving Jesus. All three levels cooperate equally and fully in an effective synthesis that provides the most definitive presentation of the historical Jesus yet attained.

From *Library Journal* This monumental work by a leading biblical scholar combines history, literary analysis, and social anthropology into a comprehensive picture of the historical Jesus. Crossan clearly addresses textual problems of the tradition, its chronology, and its attestation in a well-documented and succinct manner. The Jesus who emerges from the inclusive (rather than the exclusive) strain of Judaism resembles a magician more than a prophet, a messianic claimant, a bandit leader, or a nonviolent protestor. He preaches "a religious and economic egalitarianism" through "miracle and parable, healing and eating . . . calculated to force individuals into unmediated physical and spiritual contact with God . . . and one another." Essential for all academic and large public libraries. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. "The most important scholarly book about Jesus in decades."-- Marcus Borg, author of "Jesus: A New Vision" "Lively and idiosyncratic in the great tradition of the historical Jesus genre begun by Schweitzer."-- "The Christian Science Monitor" "[Crossan] argues that Jesus. . . became a wisdom teacher using Zen-like aphorisms and puzzling parables to challenge social conventions."-- "The New York Times" "Adds color to the interpretation of faith."-- Martin Marty, author of "A Cry of Absence" "Elegant . . . masterful. There is nothing like [Crossan's book] for thoroughness, readability, fairness, and clarity."-- Harvey Cox, author of "The Secular City" and "Many Mansions" From the Inside Flap "He comes as yet unknown into a hamlet of Lower Galilee. He is watched by the cold, hard eyes of peasants living long enough at a subsistence level to know exactly where the line is drawn between poverty and destitution. He looks like a beggar yet his eyes lack the proper cringe, his voice the proper whine, his walk the proper shuffle. He speaks about the rule of God and they listen as much from curiosity as anything else. They know all about rule and power, about kingdom and empire, but they know it in terms of tax and debt, malnutrition and sickness, agrarian oppression and demonic possession. What, they really want to know, can this kingdom of God do for a lame child, a blind parent, a demented soul screaming its tortured isolation among the graves that mark the edges of the village?" (from *The Gospel of Jesus*, "overture to *The Historical Jesus*) The Historical Jesus reveals the true Jesus--who he was, what he did, and what he said. It opens with *The Gospel of Jesus*" Crossan's studied determination of Jesus' actual words and actions stripped of any subsequent additions and placed in a capsule account of his life story. The Jesus who emerges is a savvy and courageous Jewish Mediterranean peasant, a radical social revolutionary, with a rhapsodic vision of economic, political, and religious egalitarianism and a social program for creating it. The conventional wisdom of critical historical scholarship has long held that too little is known about the historical Jesus to say definitively much more than that he lived and had a tremendous impact on his followers. "There were always historians who said it could not be done because of historical problems," writes Crossan. "There were always theologians who said it should not be done because of theological objections. And there were always scholars who said the former when they meant the latter." With this groundbreaking work, John Dominic Crossan emphatically sweeps these notions aside. He demonstrates that Jesus is actually one of the best documented figures in ancient history; the challenge is the complexity of the sources. The vivid portrayal of Jesus that emerges from Crossan's unique methodology combines the complementary disciplines of social anthropology, Greco-Roman history,

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