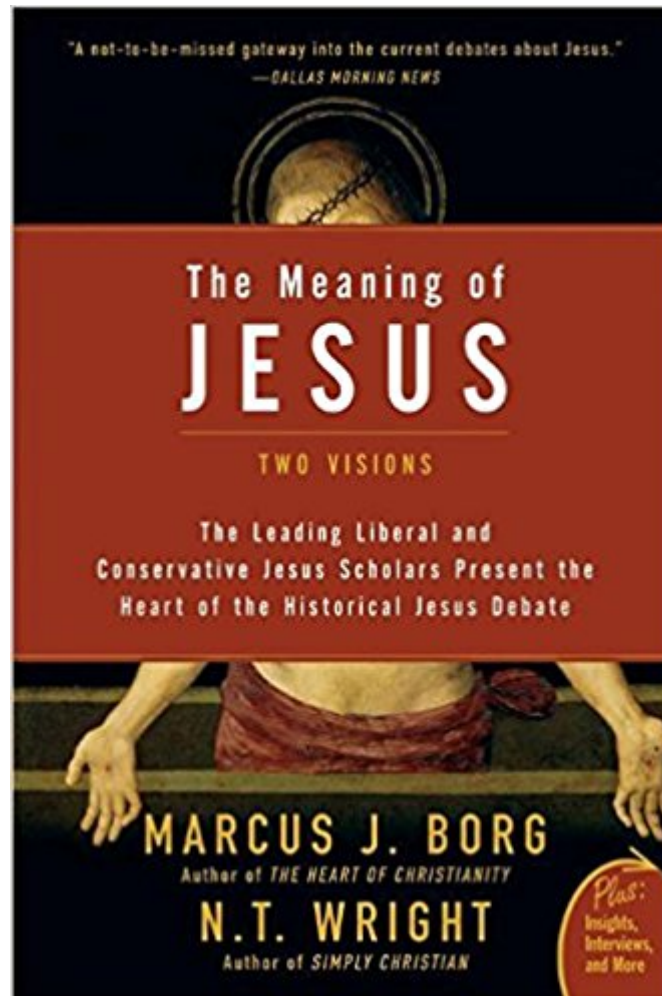




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The Meaning Of Jesus: Two Visions



Synopsis

Was Jesus born of a virgin? Did he know he was the Messiah? Was he bodily resurrected from the dead? Did he intentionally die to redeem humankind? Was Jesus God? Two leading Jesus scholars with widely divergent views go right to the heart of these questions and others, presenting the opposing visions of Jesus that shape our faith today.

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Customer Reviews

The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions is a theological remix of the old Cole Porter song "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off." In alternating chapters, the (mostly) liberal Marcus J. Borg and the (mostly) conservative N.T. Wright consider the major questions of the historical-Jesus debate that has dominated biblical studies in the 1990s. Borg and Wright agree that Jesus was the Christian messiah and preached the Kingdom of God, but they disagree about the Virgin birth, the purpose of Jesus' death, the issue of his bodily resurrection, and the question of his divinity. The Ping-Pong structure of this book and the fastidious politeness with which the authors treat one another sometimes give The Meaning of Jesus a tomato/tomahto, potato/potahto bounciness, but the project is nevertheless worthy: this is a simple, clear orientation to some of the most important biblical questions of our time, and a record of a lively and loving friendship between two of the best Christian scholars alive. --Michael Joseph Gross --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In this valuable book, historical Jesus scholars Borg (*Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*) and Wright (*Jesus and the Victory of God*) engage in a lively debate on the significance of historical Jesus research for the Christian faith. Each of the seven sections of the book contains alternating chapters by the two authors. For example, in a section called "How Do We Know About Jesus?" Borg argues that the ways people "see" Jesus are determined by the critical lenses and methods they use to look at the sources, while Wright claims that we "know" Jesus as a result of a dialogue between faith and history. In similar fashion, Borg and Wright exchange remarks on topics ranging from the Virgin Birth and "Was Jesus God?" to the crucifixion, the resurrection and the Second Coming. Borg's conclusions about the historical Jesus arise out of his conviction that the Gospels are not historical reports that can be factually verified but documents in which history is "metaphorized" to reveal symbolic meanings about Jesus' life. Wright, on the other hand, argues that a historical reading of the Gospels supports a Christian's "faith-knowledge" of Jesus. This is a splendid introduction to contemporary conversations about the historical Jesus as well as an excellent primer on New Testament Christology for general readers. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

We are using the book in a church-based book club. The response from the members has been very good but one must keep in mind that the membership tends to be decidedly liberal. As a result Borg's comments, which some could consider heretical, are welcomed and thought provoking. Wright's more orthodox commentary is sometimes hard to grasp because his sentences are too long and his vocabulary a bit out of reach for some of us. Still, Wright's comments reflect an understanding of Christianity that most of us were raised on so he is a good balance for Borg. All in all a fine selection for our group.

I liked the format of the book, the give and take between the two scholars and there is much to learn and think about. However, Borg's view requires more faith to believe than Wright's explanation of Jesus and the Gospels. One could replace "Christian tradition", "believe" etc with any other system like Buddhism or Hinduism etc and Borg's explanation would hold just as well. Let's suppose that Borg and Wright are both wrong, where does one have more to lose going with Borg or with Wright?

'The Meaning of Jesus' has seemed to take a new approach in its genre. This is most likely a result of the two men's friendship. It can be read by anyone without too much knowledge of the historical

Jesus. NT Wright does use some intellectual language which might be frightening to some, but his point is not missed. Marcus Borg writes in plain old english which makes for easy reading without sacrificing to much meaningful content. This book is definitely an introduction and nothing written in it is new. It does cover many issues on several different topics. I'd reccomend this book to anyone who is casually interested in the case for the historical Jesus. I think you'll find it a very rewarding read.

The portions written by Marcus Borg were relatively easy to understand, not neccesarily to agree with. NT Wright tends to write as if he is lecturing to a seminary class, using lots of seminary speak (words that the average reader will need to look up in adictionary) Not sure that his chapters are useful for the non-seminarian. Overall the book demands some serious thinking on the part of the layman (us), It is difficult reading.

The authors of The Meaning of Jesus (Marcus Borg and N. T. Wright) are balanced, skilled representatives of their respective positions--so called liberal and conservative Christian theology. Without rock throwing they acknowledge the different prospective they believe. Most important, each writer is wise and skilled and passionate without irrelevant, irrational arguments. Details are important to both scholars but the big picture, the principal isn't lost. Finally, after presenting their best arguments and conclusion, they leave it to the reader to explore the strength of each. The reader will appreciate that neither position wins. Both positions are usable because they are understandable. Often they are capable of supporting the other's input because Jesus is always in focus. Reading and pondering the arguments is a refreshing, and spiritually fulfilling experience.

Like the energy of the book. It's the kind of alternative energy that I felt in the gospels describing Jesus and his attitude to life. I like the contrast of views and they are not going to start a 100 years war about their differences. Great for a read-round in a group which is what we are doing. The group's background is diverse so challenging for all of us and it asks the right questions. Great stuff!

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Thought provoking dialogue provided by two respected scholars who provoked me to a a deeper understanding of faith, the role of the man Jesus, and how much we can learn from historical sources. This will be a fine book for a discussion club, if we take it slow... lots to ponder.

Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright (Tom) not only explore the territories raised by the fundamentalist/modernist controversies at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, but go beyond that old debate (which really is grounded in what kind of principles one uses to interpret scripture--a far older debate, as old as the early church fathers) and really strike at the heart of the matter: Who is Jesus (whom Christians call Christ or Messiah)? If he is merely a historical character, buried under layers of interpretation put in place by religious communities of faith (the search for the 'historical' Jesus) then the true character of the gospels and New Testament letters is lost. Tom Wright makes it clear that Jesus is alive! But, Marcus Borg, while sifting through layers, understands that Jesus Christ is Lord, and the staggering implications of that for Christians in any age. No matter where you fall in the theological spectrum, this book, will only make Jesus shine ever more brightly, like the true diamond Christ is. This book can take one to the Christ of faith, who is, after all, "the Living Christ."

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