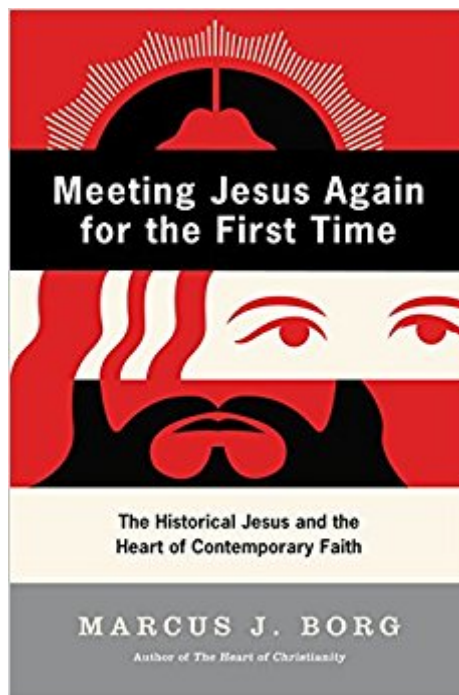




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Meeting Jesus Again For The First Time: The Historical Jesus And The Heart Of Contemporary Faith



Synopsis

Of the many recent books on the historical Jesus, none has explored what the latest biblical scholarship means for personal faith. Now, in *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, Marcus Borg addresses the yearnings of those who want a fully contemporary faith that welcomes rather than oppresses our critical intelligence and openness to the best of historical scholarship. Borg shows how a rigorous examination of historical findings can lead to a new faith in Christ, one that is critical and, at the same time, sustaining. Drawing on his own journey from a naïve, unquestioning belief in Christ through collegiate skepticism to a mature and contemporary Christian faith, Borg illustrates how an understanding of the historical Jesus can actually lead to a more authentic Christian life—one not rooted in creed or dogma, but in a life of spiritual challenge, compassion, and community. In straightforward, accessible prose, Borg looks at the major findings of modern Jesus scholarship from the perspective of faith, bringing alive the many levels of Jesus's character: spirit person, teacher of alternative wisdom, social prophet, and movement founder. He also reexamines the major stories of the Old Testament vital to an authentic understanding of Jesus, showing how an enriched understanding of these stories can uncover new truths and new pathways to faith.

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Customer Reviews

Conservative and evangelical Christians often attack the audacity and impiety of the Jesus Seminar. Just imagine - a collection of scholars proposing to vote on the authenticity of the New Testament

record of Jesus life and words! As one once anchored in contemporary fundamentalism, I find it easy to understand this offense. Borg challenges this reaction. He writes with a sensitivity, honesty and spirituality that is much to be admired. Like so many others, he found traditional and conservative beliefs about Jesus unsatisfying in early adulthood. His personal hold on traditional Christian beliefs waned as he embraced a modern worldview and liberal religious scholarship. He became a closet agnostic, then a closet atheist. Yet, Borg was somehow drawn to always keep searching. This book is a record of his search; a moving description of Truth as Borg has found it; a very personal answer to the question, "Who is this Jesus?" His essential premise involves the importance, even primacy, of our personal image of Jesus. Is Jesus the savior who requires faith? Or, is Jesus a great teacher of moral ideals? Borg rejects both in chapter one. Borg imagines Jesus as one to whom spirit, and the experience of spirit, was foundational. Accordingly, Borg does not understand the Christian life to be "about believing or about being good It is about a relationship with God that involves us in a journey of transformation." Reconstructing the pre-Easter life of Jesus with historical criticism, Borg explains that Jesus was a spirit person (chapter two), a social prophet and movement founder (chapter three), and a teacher of wisdom (chapter four).

I am glad I read this book. I think it has helped to redirect my search for God and to help me rebuild my faith in Him, so that I move from a fearful relationship with an angry Supreme Master to one with a loving Supreme Parent. I first read the Bible cover-to-cover on my own as a youngster. This was probably not a good thing, as I mostly came away with an impression of an Angry God. And I certainly was in no position to understand at the tender age of 11 the cultural background of the world of the Hebrews or Jesus. The trouble is that in some ways reading about the life of Christ is a bit like reading a mystery. Sure you can read the book again, but you already know whodunit the next time you go back to it, and having that knowledge changes the way you see things from then on. "Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time" has clarified for me the difference between pre-Easter and post-Easter Jesus. Before this when I reread the Gospels and looked over what Jesus said or did prior to his death and resurrection, I looked at it as though He was the post-Easter Godly Jesus the entire time, that He was always God right from the get-go. Now I am looking at Him more in the sense of His humanity as it was recorded in the first 3 gospels. When I stop to think about it, I expect He was a pretty normal kid, and I am not sure that He really saw Himself as God as that point waiting around to be worshipped. Rather I do think He was very much a man constantly in touch with His Father, so I am giving more consideration to the example He set where he showed me how to live and how to be in touch with the Father all the time. (Or at least try to be.

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