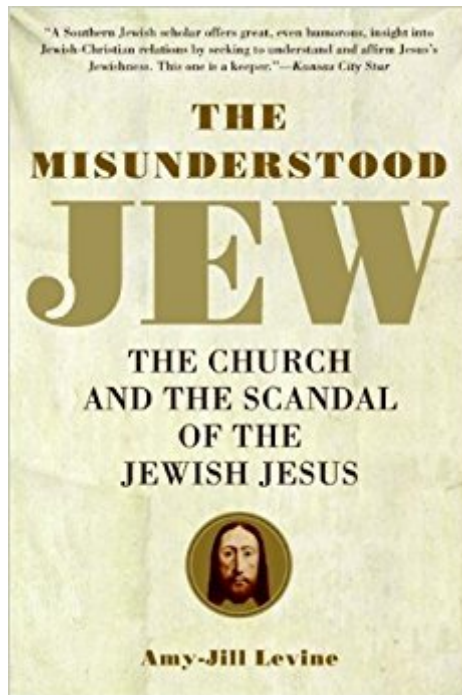


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The Misunderstood Jew: The Church And The Scandal Of The Jewish Jesus



Synopsis

In the *The Misunderstood Jew*, scholar Amy-Jill Levine helps Christians and Jews understand the "Jewishness" of Jesus so that their appreciation of him deepens and a greater interfaith dialogue can take place. Levine's humor and informed truth-telling provokes honest conversation and debate about how Christians and Jews should understand Jesus, the New Testament, and each other.

Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: HarperOne; Reprint edition (November 20, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0061137782

ISBN-13: 978-0061137785

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 145 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #52,681 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #31 in Books > Religion &

Spirituality > Judaism > History #38 in Books > History > World > Religious > Judaism #52

in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > History > Historical Theology

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. It is a simple truth that Jews and Christians should be close friends, since they share common roots and a basic ethical system. But the gulf between the groups seems vast. Levine, professor of New Testament studies at Vanderbilt, presents a strong and convincing case for understanding Jesus as "a Jew speaking to Jews," and for viewing Christianity as a Jewish movement that ultimately swept the world in its influence and authority. But with this expansion came an insidious anti-Jewish sentiment, fed by some New Testament texts (wrongly understood, the author urges) and the emerging political power of the Christian church. Levine does a masterful job of describing the subtleties of anti-Semitism, across the years and across the religious spectrum, from the conservative evangelical mission to convert the Jews to the liberation theologians who picture Jews as adherents to an older, less merciful religion. In the end, Levine offers a prescription for healing and mutual understanding; a chapter titled "Quo Vadis?" outlines steps that can be taken by Jews and Christians alike to bridge the divide that has caused so much suffering over the centuries. Written for the general public, this is an outstanding addition to the literature of interfaith dialogue. (Jan.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights

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Levine, a professor of New Testament studies at Vanderbilt, joins the ranks of Bart Ehrman, John Dominic Crossan, and others in the search for the historical Jesus. In the first several chapters, Levine treads familiar ground, discussing Jesus within the context of Judaism and examining how Christianity evolved from a Jewish sect to a gentile church. This information can be found in other, more clearly written sources, but what Levine does very well is discuss Jewish-Christian relations throughout the millennia, even as she provides a context for discussion. Though Levine clearly shows how Judaism has become a scapegoat of Christianity and offers many examples of Judaism's tenets taken out of context by church writers, she is not writing to stir up trouble. What she wants readers to understand is that lifting Jesus from Judaism is not helpful to either group and that there are plenty of ways to focus on similarities. As Levine concludes, "As different as they are, church and synagogue have . . . the same destination whether called . . . the kingdom of heaven or the messianic age." Ilene Cooper

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Why the Jews have been misunderstood through out the Christian history is a book that every Christian should read. This book tells why and gives reasons as to why we should take a second look at Jewish history. Jesus himself was a Jew and he came to his own people and the Jews weren't rejected as some claim but all Israel will be saved as Romans says.

Somewhat on the heavy side, not for the casual reader. But for someone who wants to really think through things and gain insight into what was more likely Jesus' mindset than most Christians read into him, this would be good. Very insightful. Worth the read.

Excellent examination of Jesus in his time and his milieu, preaching as a Jew to Jews and non-Jews. Explaining the meaning of phrases in the context of the time. Example: analyzing The Lord's Prayer and its foundation in Judaism and Torah. Highly recommended.

When discussing any topic, especially one relating to theology, many authors allow their biases (which all have) to speak for them. I find this author to be very professional and respectful of the religious faiths of others, avoiding distasteful language and expressing hate as some authors do when discussing the beliefs of others. Lots of useful historical information can be gleaned from this

book.

I enjoyed the book and learned a great deal. The author waxed a little tedious at times, probably due to the goals and subject matter of the book, and the points important to her personally. She tried to be fair-minded to both the Jew and the Christian. I learned to see things more clearly from the culture and context in which they originally occurred. I had never given sufficient thought to Jesus as a Jew, speaking to Jews.

Does a thorough job laying out the ways in which the New Testament can be read in an anti-Jewish way. In her final chapter she also gives lots of ways that Christians can foster inter-religious dialogue with Jews and combat anti-semitism. This is a must read for people interested in Christian-Jewish dialogue and for church leaders who want to both understand and combat the anti-semitism which the church has encouraged in the past and which still continues to this day.

Amy-Jill Levine is amazing. I have loved her "great Courses" from the Teaching Company, and this book is absolutely fascinating to me. My son is married to an Israeli-American woman. It is important for me to understand her culture with my culture as we celebrate Rosh Hashanah with her and she celebrates Christmas with us. This book creates an important common ground that helps me understand both our cultures better. Excellent.

Amy Jill Levine's writing is lucid and to the point as are her lectures where she attracts large attendance as she has great powers of communication. Having a sound knowledge of Jewish tradition and history and being also and a member of Orthodox Judaism, she also is Professor of New Testament and has a rare insight into the New Testament at which she is expert. Her book is written in a language that makes its subject accessible to a wider audience, both scholars and general readers alike. A friend "borrowed" my copy permanently so I have bought another copy..

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